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NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL

MONTEREY, CALIFORNIA

THESIS

**THE HUMAN DRONES OF ISIS: HOW 21st CENTURY
TERRORISM USES REMOTE WARFARE**

by

Charles F. Noble

Daniel K. A. Sigler

June 2017

Thesis Advisor:

Second Reader:

Doug Borer

Craig Whiteside

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**THE HUMAN DRONES OF ISIS: HOW 21st CENTURY TERRORISM USES
REMOTE WARFARE**

Charles F. Noble
Major, United States Army
B.S., Olivet Nazarene University, 2006

Daniel K. A. Sigler
Major, German Army
M.S., German Armed Forces University Munich, 2007

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of

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POLITICAL WARFARE**

AND

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from the

**NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL
June 2017**

Approved by: Doug Borer
Thesis Advisor

Craig Whiteside
Second Reader

John Arquilla
Chair, Department of Defense Analysis

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ABSTRACT

Over the course of a few short years, the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) expanded from Iraq and Syria into North Africa and South and Southeast Asia. This group initially took advantage of the chaos created by the Syrian civil war and the sectarian fractures of Iraq. ISIS sought to control territory and establish a new “caliphate.” The group set forth a clear strategy, one based on violence, extremism, and fear. It also made its way to Europe through attacks in Belgium, France, Germany, and other European countries. While terrorism is not a new phenomenon in Europe, there is a question of why ISIS would seek to conduct extra-territorial attacks if the main goal was to establish sovereignty in Syria and Iraq. These wide-ranging attacks can be defined as a form of remote warfare, specifically remote terrorism. Remote terrorism allows ISIS and similar organizations to enjoy the same capabilities that remote warfare provides nation-states. Therefore, the basic hypothesis for this research is: Terrorist groups that seek to control or already control territory will also use remote warfare to conduct extra-territorial attacks. This thesis will not develop a completely new theory of remote warfare. Rather, it will consider case studies, and conduct cross-case comparisons in order to identify gaps in existing remote warfare theory. It will further establish remote terrorism as a unique domain within an existing concept of remote warfare. This will be done through the examination of terror attacks in Europe—specifically Paris, Brussels, and Nice—conducted by ISIS.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AQ	Al Qaeda
BRI	Brigade of Research and Intervention
CET	Central European Time
CJTF-OIR	Combined Joint Task Force—Operation Inherent Resolve
CT	Counter Terrorism
EU	European Union
HVT	High Value Target
IPOL	Directorate General for International Polices
ISIS	Islamic State in Iraq and Syria
IW	Irregular Warfare
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
ORG	Oxford Research Group
OSCE	Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
PMSC	Private Military & Security Companies
RAID	Recherché Assistance Intervention Dissuasion
RC	Remote Controlled
RW	Remote Warfare
SOF	Special Operations Forces
START	Study of Terrorism and the Responses to Terrorism
TTP	Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures
UAV	Unmanned Aerial Vehicle
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
U.S.	United States

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I. ON “REMOTE CONTROL”

A. INTRODUCTION

The word “drone” conjures many meanings. It is a worker bee building a hive for its queen, a senseless person with no real direction, or as most would now think, an unmanned aircraft flying overhead. All of these notions have the common idea of mindlessness. The worker bee lives and dies at the direction of the hive and queen, respectively, and the unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) is completely on “remote control,” operated by an outside actor. In the context of warfare, specifically remote warfare (RW), the word “drone” can be found throughout many newspaper headlines due to the use of UAVs in fighting terrorism abroad. The drone is a means to an end in operations connected to a higher strategy. The bee or the aircraft, even in mindlessness, has purpose and direction. What more could a drone be if it had “human-like” decision making with regards to its targets? The Islamic State or ISIS has answered that question. They have led a campaign against European targets with aid from such human drones. Many world powers use drones in the technical sense (e.g., UAVs) for military action. The drone also offers the user flexibility, lower costs in terms of lives and resources, and easy access to its targets. For the same reasons, ISIS conducts terror attacks against its targets. The main idea of this thesis is terror attacks, specifically those conducted by organizations that seek to hold territory and are conducting RW. Additionally, this thesis will establish terror attacks as a unique domain and expand upon an existing model of RW¹ through cases of ISIS-directed and inspired attacks within Europe.

The group at the center of all the cases used within the thesis is the Islamic State. There are many names that the media and various governments have used such as IS, ISIS, ISIL, and the term Daesh, which Arab countries have used as an insult against the group. For continuity purposes the moniker “ISIS” will be used for the study.

¹ Jon Moran, *Remote Warfare (RW): Developing a Framework for Evaluating Its Use* (London, England: Remote Control Project, 2015).

While some believe that ISIS is just another group in a long line of terrorist organizations, others see the group as unlike any other. The delineation in most cases is seen in ISIS' control of territory, adaptability, and brutality. Peter R. Mansoor wrote, "Unlike Hezbollah, Hamas, the Tamil Tigers, or the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia, ISIS is not content with controlling a limited amount of territory confined to a single nation-state."² ISIS is often referred to as a learning organization,³ and if this is so, it is at least arguable that they are taking the lessons from larger nation-states in regards to the advantages of using drones to attack their enemies. These examples and meanings are not at the center of dispute; there may be room, however, for an expansion of the connotation of the word "drone" and its place in the theory of remote warfare (RW).

Through the end of 2015 and through the summer of 2016, Europe and the world saw first-hand the savagery of ISIS. Some in the media were quick to qualify the attacks as something other than outright acts of terrorism. As the facts of each incident became more apparent, the early assessments became less accurate. In light of this development, what term or concept could best qualify these attacks? The *Long War Journal* recently published an article⁴ that used the words "remote controlled" in reference to ISIS attacks in Europe. Germany's Interior Minister, Thomas de Maiziere, said that the jihadists were guided by remote control.⁵ French prosecutor Francois Molins has used the same phrase, "remote-controlled,"⁶ to describe a group of women who were plotting terrorism in Paris. Following the July 2016 train attack in Wurzburg, the German news outlet *Süddeutsche Zeitung* reported: "The details revealed in the transcripts [see Figure 1] are chilling. Khan

² Peter R. Mansoor, "Why ISIS Is Different—And Why It Matters," *Strategika* 29, last modified February 1, 2016, accessed November 28, 2016, 2016, <http://www.hoover.org/research/why-isis-different-and-why-it-matters>.

³ Felicia Schwartz, "Former DIA Director: ISIS Is a Learning Organization That Adapts Rapidly," *Indian Strategic Studies*, last modified December 3, 2014, <http://strategicstudyindia.blogspot.com/2014/12/former-dia-director-isis-is-learning.html>; Charles Lister, *Profiling the Islamic State* (Doha, Qatar: Brookings Doha Center, 2014).

⁴ Thomas Joscelyn, "Terror Plots in Germany, France Were 'Remote-Controlled' by Islamic State Operatives," *Long War Journal*, last modified September 24, 2016, <http://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2016/09/terror-plots-in-germany-france-were-remote-controlled-by-islamic-state-operatives.php>.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid.

[Riaz Khan Ahmadzai] and Daleel may have acted alone, in the sense that no other terrorist was physically with them when they struck. But they were certainly not ‘lone wolves’ in any meaningful sense.”⁷

Early 2016 Riaz Khan A. in discussion with an ISIS Strategist via “Telegram”:
Chat-partner: "What weapons do you need for the killing?"
Riaz Khan A.: "Knives and an axe are placed ready."
Chat-partner: "Brother, don't you think doing it with a car would be better?"
Riaz Khan A.: "I don't know how to drive a car."
Chat-partner: "You should learn it."
Riaz Khan A.: "Learning takes time."
Chat-partner: "The damage would be considerably bigger."
Riaz Khan A.: "I want to go to paradise tonight."

July 18th 2016 6:34pm Wurzburg Germany:
Riaz Khan A.: "Brother, I'm sending you my video. I will carry out an attack with an axe in Germany today."
Riaz Khan A. sent a video to an ISIS propaganda-agency: "I'm a holy warrior of the Islamic state. I will kill you with my knife and chop your heads with my axe, God willing."
Chat-partner: "Not with a knife. Do it with the axe. If you carry out the attack, God willing, the Islamic State will take responsibility for you."
Riaz Khan A.: "I'm sending you the video now."
Chat-partner: "Secure it quickly."
Riaz Kahn A.: "Pray for me to become a martyr. I'm waiting for the train."

Riaz Khan boards a regional train ready to fulfill ISIS strategy in Europe:
RiazA.: "I'm about to start."
Chat-partner: "Paradise is awaiting you."

Figure 1. Conversation between ISIS Controller and Riaz Khan Ahmadzai⁸

The Wurzburg attack is an example of ISIS attempting to exert influence and effects outside their geospatial areas of control. It also meets the preliminary check of flexibility, autonomy, and most importantly, outside control. This examination requires further research. The inquiry will not seek to refute the terms “lone wolf” or “inspired attack,” but it will take each of these types into account under the umbrella of RW. The research conducts a case study, examines a set of cases specific to ISIS attacks within

⁷ Hans Leyendecker, Georg Mascolo, “Germany’s ‘Remote-Control’ Terror Attacks, Online Chats Revealed,” Worldcrunch, last modified September 21, 2016, <http://www.worldcrunch.com/terror-in-europe/germany-s-remote-control-terror-attacks-online-chats-revealed/c23s21782/>.

⁸ Adapted from Ibid.

Europe, and seeks to establish remote terrorism as a unique domain inside in an existing concept of RW.

We also try to answer the following questions:

- What are the conditions and mechanisms that enable the Islamic State to conduct attacks in Europe that amount to a form of remote warfare?
- How are ISIS terrorist attacks related to the theory of remote warfare?
- Why would ISIS conduct attacks in Europe?
- What are the common factors in ISIS attacks in Europe that would amount to remote warfare?

The info-graph in Figure 2 establishes how ISIS attacks fit the concept and outlines subsequent research. Before one can find answers to this question, the concept of remote warfare must be established for the correct context and placement within the existing theory.

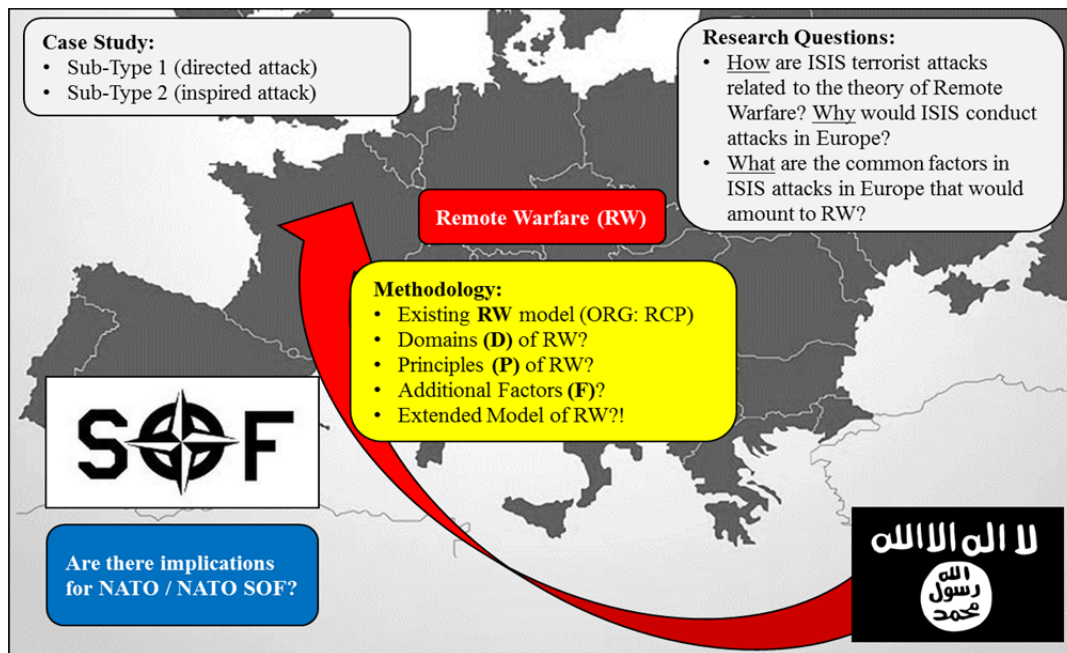


Figure 2. Thesis Outline Information Graph⁹

⁹ Adapted from “Europa 3 - Landkarte Für Europa,” Stepmap, accessed May 30, 2017, <http://www.stepmap.de/landkarte/europa-3-1192608>.

B. ISIS STRATEGY: STRENGTHS AND LIMITATIONS

The establishment of ISIS strategy has its roots in the early machinations of Osama Bin Laden, and his notion of the “near and far enemy.”¹⁰ Bin Laden devised a strategy of attacking the “far” enemy or the West, while his follower Ayman al-Zawahiri maintained the idea of the “near” enemy or Middle Eastern regimes. The “far” enemy strategy was manifested in the September 11 attack, which could be counted as the first large-scale example of remote terror. Al Qaeda did not pursue in earnest attacks on western targets in order to focus on its struggle with the “near” enemy and persevering against losses to coalition forces in Iraq and Afghanistan.¹¹ At the end of 2011 through 2012, the United States ended its mission in Iraq, the Iraqi Security Forces fell into disrepair, and sectarian violence increased once again. These factors contributed to a security vacuum that gave rise to the Sunni militant leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi and the so-called Islamic State. Baghdadi and his ilk consolidated power and moved on targets of opportunity within Syria and Iraq. In a drastic turn from their predecessors and sources of inspiration, however, ISIS chose to once again pursue the “far” enemy.¹²

While this thesis does not fully explore the background or motivations for why ISIS conducts itself in the manner it has over the past few years, there must be some consideration of key factors that contribute to answering why the so-called Islamic State would strike targets abroad in concert with their domestic operations. The author of *The Management of Savagery*, under the pseudonym Abu Naji Bakr, wrote a manifesto on how an aspirant terror organization would go about establishing a pseudo-state.¹³ The text provides not only a form for strategy, but also grounds for why ISIS would conduct remote warfare. Specifically, the text states this about keeping an enemy off balance: “The policy of ‘paying the price’ is the situation will deter the enemy and make him think one thousand

¹⁰ Timothy Noah, “The Near Enemy Theory,” Slate, last modified February 26, 2009, accessed April 25, 2017, http://www.slate.com/articles/news_and_politics/chatterbox/2009/02/the_nearenemy_theory.html.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Fawaz A. Gerges, *The Far Enemy: Why Jihad Went Global* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 345.

¹³ Jeff Sole, “Management of Savagery - A Model for Establishing the Islamic State,” The Mackenzie Institute, last modified June 2, 2016, accessed April 25, 2017, <http://mackenzieinstitute.com/management-of-savagery-a-model-for-establishing-the-islamic-state/>.

times before attacking regions managed by a regime of the administration of savagery because he knows that he will pay the price (for doing so), even if (the retribution) comes later.”¹⁴ The terror manifesto, coupled with a predilection for brutality, control, and new world order, has given rise to ISIS and their grand ambitions for not only control of territory, but the ability to strike at their enemies with complete impunity.¹⁵

As ISIS has a strategy for Syria, Iraq, and other global locations, it also has a strategy for Europe. An issue of the *Perspectives on Terrorism Journal* states, “Seen in the light of the investigations of IS [Islamic State] related plots in Europe, the official statements and propaganda leave little doubt that the group is leading an organized terrorist campaign of retribution and deterrence against its European adversaries.”¹⁶ An article published in the academic journal *Decision Analysis*¹⁷ examines ISIS strategy and breaks down its various components. Table 1 outlines what the report states as the main components to its strategy.

Table 1. Main Components of ISIS Strategy¹⁸

C1	C2	C3	C4
Control and Govern the Islamic State	Establish a Caliphate in Iraq and the Levant	Expand Islam and Sharia Law World Wide	Re-create the Power and Glory of Sunni Islam

The four components in Table 1 lay the foundation for what ISIS wants to achieve both regionally and globally. For simplicity’s sake, each component will be attributed an

¹⁴ Scott Englund, “Chaos, the Legacy of Daesh: Observations After Brussels,” Abu Dhabi: Trends Research & Advisory last modified April 5, 2016, <http://trendsinstitution.org/chaos-the-legacy-of-daesh-observations-after-brussels/>.

¹⁵ “Management of Savagery - A Model for Establishing the Islamic State,” The Mackenzie Institute, last modified June 2, 2016, <http://mackenzieinstitute.com/management-of-savagery-a-model-for-establishing-the-islamic-state/>.

¹⁶ Petter Nesser, Anne Stenersen, and Emilie Oftedal, “Jihadi Terrorism in Europe: The IS-Effect,” *Perspectives on Terrorism* 10, no. 6 (December 2016).

¹⁷ Johannes Siebert, Detlof von Winterfeldt, and Richard S. John, “Identifying and Structuring the Objectives of the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) and Its Followers,” *Decision Analysis* 13, no. 1 (March 2016): 26–50, accessed April 25, 2017, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1287/deca.2015.0324>.

¹⁸ Adapted from Ibid., 179.

arbitrary label of C (X). The three components that directly support the Islamic State’s possible use of remote warfare are: “1) Control and Govern the Islamic State (C1/2); 2) Expand Islam and Sharia Law World Wide (C3); and 3) Re-create the Power and Glory of Sunni Islam (C4).”¹⁹ These three require a deeper look to properly nest the idea of RW. According to the START report, the sub-categories of “Capacity and Control,” “External Support,” and “Umma (Community) Support”²⁰ are a large portion of both C3 and C4. The specific objectives within Capacity and Control, External Support, and Umma Support are outlined in Table 2.²¹

Table 2. Objectives: Capacity and Control, External Support, Umma Support²²

C1/2	Shape Battle Fields to Gain Advantages	Spook their Military Adversaries by Suicidal Attacks	Increase Number of Fighters and Followers
C3	Attack Foreign Countries from the Inside /Create Brand Notoriety as Ruthless and Pure	Demonstrate Military Strength and Terroristic Capabilities/Kill, Frighten and Convert Infidels	Be a Feared, Authentic, Radical, Brutal, Rigorous Movement
C4	Guard and Treat Sunnis with Respect	Demonstrate Superiority of (Strict) Religion and Increase Sunni Self-Esteem	Be Recognized as the Leader of the (Global) Jihad

These specific objectives are chosen to highlight the fact that ISIS 1) has a definite strategy 2) is conducting more than “lone wolf” or “inspired” attacks abroad.²³ The objectives show ISIS members have aspirations of imposing their will on other countries, much like legitimate nation-states do on a regular basis. The organization has

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ These components, sub-categories, and objectives are not all-inclusive to the figures within the START report. Each of the aspects of the report was collected by both Subject Matter Experts (SME) and Open Source. The expanded objectives explore what ISIS is reportedly trying to achieve both within the Middle East and North Africa, as well as within Foreign Territories.

²² Adapted from Siebert, von Winterfeldt, and John, “Identifying and Structuring the Objectives of the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) and Its Followers,” 26–50.

²³ An in-depth study of the structure of ISIS will not be a part of this thesis. For the best understanding of the origins, expansion, and structure of ISIS, the books *ISIS Inside the Army of Terror* by Michael Weiss and Hassan Hassan and *The ISIS Apocalypse* by William McCants are formative works that provide noteworthy insights into the origins and structure of the Islamic State. This also leaves room for future study if ISIS is conducting a form of RW, to what degree does their structure support its use?

no true “time-line” to speak of in obtaining these objectives, but rather that they will do whatever it takes for however long it takes to achieve them.

The information presented in Tables 1 and 2 builds toward answering why ISIS would consider using RW. The July 2016 article “ISIS’s Campaign in Europe” by Caitlin Forrest and Dina Shahrokhi and “Understanding the Changing Tactics of the so-called Islamic State” by Vera Mironova on “why” ISIS would conduct RW in Europe aid in answering the “European strategy” question. There are currently two schools of thought that could move toward answering “why.” The first involves the ideas of desperation and reprisal. Journalists at the *Washington Post* reported in July 2016 that ISIS was decentralizing and conducting attacks due to their recent territorial loses in Iraq and Syria. The article further states that “US counterterrorism experts believe the mass casualty attacks in Istanbul and Baghdad in the past month were largely a response to military reversals in Syria.” The article goes on to say “such terrorist acts are likely to continue and even intensify.”²⁴ Both of these statements allude to the fact that ISIS is conducting extra-territorial attacks because they are becoming desperate, as well as retaliating for their recent losses.

The other idea that is circulating is the idea that although ISIS has lost much territory, wealth and manpower in recent months, their attacks are simply a continuation of a pre-existing strategy. In a 2016 report, Paul Rogers wrote that ISIS could be in a state of flux. He stated that although there is evidence that ISIS is being beaten back in Syria and Iraq, there could be grounds for thinking of ISIS as only being in a state of transition.²⁵ This statement is reinforced by the July 2016 Forrest-Shahrokhi article in which they stated that attacks in Europe are not a “desperate” reaction to losses in Iraq and Syria as Secretary of State John Kerry suggested, but rather a continuation of its global objectives in spite of them.²⁶

²⁴ Souad Mekhennet and Jody Warrick, “Inside ISIS: Quietly Preparing for the Loss of the “Caliphate,” *The Washington Post*, sec. World, July 13, 2016.

²⁵ Paul Rogers, *Islamic State: Retreat Or Transition* (London: Oxford Research Group, 2016).

²⁶ Caitlin Forrest and Dina Shahrokhi, “ISIS’s Campaign in Europe: March 25th - July 15th 2016.” Institute for the Study of War (blog), accessed July 15, 2016, <http://iswresearch.blogspot.com/2016/07/isiss-campaign-in-europe-march-25th.html>.

Finally, ISIS could be attempting RW due to the same advantages it gives larger nation-states.²⁷ As previously stated, nation-states such as the United States, Great Britain, and France all have offensive drone capabilities. These countries use their drones to overcome various limitations in resources and political or public will, and to offer precision strikes in accordance to their ethical and legal directives.²⁸ While ISIS differs in the latter statement in their brutal, inequitable targeting of innocents, they do share some of the same limitations that would make the use of RW an acceptable choice.

ISIS has lost a large portion of their territory and resources over the past year, but even before that they had heavy limitations on how they could use those resources. The inspiration and direction to individuals within Europe offers ISIS a mode to strike at specific targets while overcoming resource and territorial limitations. These strikes also get at the limitation of political and public will. While this limitation is reversed for the aforementioned nation-states (in that sending masses of troops to deter or destroy an adversary is wildly unpopular), ISIS has to make its followers believe that those options could be possible, by projecting strength outside their boundaries. These attacks throughout Europe offer a way of inspiring future followers, or even drumming up support through resources or popular opinion. It is arguable that even if ISIS is driven from Syria and Iraq, they would continue to attempt at striking targets abroad to maintain the “status quo” of projecting strength, recruitment, and exact revenge.

The equivalencies made in the previous section are not to say that ISIS is completely on par with the nation-states that use drones against military and political targets vice ISIS’s targeting of civilians. This begs the question of why target civilians if ISIS is trying to achieve their strategies abroad? A possible analogy might be the historic example of the strategic bombing campaigns of World War II. Targets such as Dresden in Germany or Tokyo in Japan offered the allies opportunities to demoralize and even terrorize large population centers of the Axis powers. These targets held some military value, but were mostly civilian populations. The United Kingdom also conducted night

²⁷ William McCants, *The ISIS Apocalypse* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 2015).

²⁸ Peter Bergen et al., “World of Drones,” *New America: International Security*, accessed May 12, 2017, <https://www.newamerica.org/in-depth/world-of-drones/>.

raids against German civilian targets in retribution for attacks against London. These two examples could give insight to the rationale that ISIS could be using in their campaigns abroad. The previously stated linkages are not to say that what nation-states are doing is an immoral practice, it is to say that they provide examples for learning organizations such as ISIS to feed their perverse view of how they could possibly win an inevitably losing battle.

C. REMOTE WARFARE AND ISIS ATTACKS

The literature germane to the proper terms and concepts for analysis is the 2015 report “Remote Warfare (RW): Developing a Framework for Evaluating Its Use” by Dr. Jon Moran.²⁹ Through Dr. Moran’s³⁰ research, the Oxford Research Group’s (ORG) Remote Control Project defines RW as the following: “Remote warfare is a term used to describe a group of tactics that allow states to prosecute military activities from a distance rather than using conventional warfare.”³¹ ISIS attacks in Europe have potential to fit within the existing theory. Moran’s report states that, “Remote-control warfare is an emerging strategy that allows for conflict to be actioned at a distance.”³² ISIS has used conventional tactics against Iraqi and Syrian forces, but has made serious efforts to attack targets throughout the globe, thus “conflict actioned at a distance.” The literature also states, “[remote warfare] incorporates technologies and light-footprint deployments that enable policy makers and military planners to approve actions that would unlikely be considered if using conventional means.”³³ While ISIS does not have policy makers in

²⁹ Jon Moran, *Remote Warfare (RW): Developing a Framework for Evaluating Its Use* (London: Remote Control Project, 2015).

³⁰ Dr. Jon Moran is a lecturer in the Department of Politics and International Relations at the University of Leicester. He is researching the role of ‘remote warfare’ in conflict in conjunction with the ORG: Remote Control Project.

³¹ Oxford Research Group, “Aspects of Remote Warfare,” The Remote Control Project, last modified October 12, 2016, <http://remotecontrolproject.org/aspects-of-remote-warfare-2/>.

³² Oxford Research Group, “Remote-Control Warfare Briefing #17,” The Remote Control Project, August 2, 2016, accessed October 12, 2016, <http://remotecontrolproject.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/Open-Briefing-remote-control-warfare-briefing-17-0108161.pdf>.

³³ Ibid.

the exact terms referenced in the report, they do have an established, governing body, as well as military planners that consider strategy and the application of resources.³⁴

Jon Moran describes six principles that he believes are inherent and must be present to define the action as RW. The principles founded in 1960 are the following:

1. The use of flexible expeditionary/policing forces rather than garrisons operating from networks of “lily pad bases”
2. The use of local auxiliary forces who have knowledge and less accountability
3. The use of “killing at a distance” techniques based on new technology
4. The use of elite special units (both public and private) as force multipliers (This may include covert action)
5. The increasing emphasis on intelligence/surveillance to enable force concentration
6. Information Operations.³⁵

The attacks across Europe, and even the United States, require examination as to what degree these principles exist within ISIS attacks, as well as if there are any other factors that arise.

As far as setting context, applying terror attacks with the concept of remote warfare requires a detailing of the Oxford Research Group’s Remote Control Project, specifically Dr. Jon Moran’s contributions. Dr. Moran’s report was written to outline both the history and the theory of remote warfare as it pertains to British strategy of standard drone use in warfare.³⁶ He utilizes historical examples along with contemporary technological advances, however, to come to a definition of remote warfare that provides a substantial portion of the framework for the case studies that will be analyzed within this thesis. The report is also one of the only non-technical definitions found in the

³⁴ Siebert, von Winterfeldt, and John, “Identifying and Structuring the Objectives of the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) and Its Followers,” 26–50.

³⁵ Moran, *Remote Warfare* (RW), 4.

³⁶ Ibid..

existing body of literature. Dr. Moran states that RW is not a new type of war³⁷ and even states that “A concentration on technology (such as drones) may lead away from understanding the ‘deep’ nature of remote warfare.”³⁸ He offers five case studies starting with the United Kingdom’s 2000 intervention in Sierra Leone.³⁹ Each of the case studies further supports his concept of RW, and to the support of this thesis, shows that RW is not unique to current conflict or exclusive to the use of remotely piloted aircraft. The idea of technology and its use in Dr. Moran’s definition of RW will not be important to building the theory.

The ORG: Remote Control Project also outlines five domains within RW. The five domains are the following: 1) Special Operations Forces 2) Unmanned Vehicles and Autonomous Weapons Systems 3) Private Military & Security Companies (PMSC) 4) Cyber Conflict 5) Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance.”⁴⁰ As mentioned before, the following research will seek to establish “terror attacks” as a potential sixth unique domain within the concept of RW.

D. BACKGROUND LITERATURE

For a wide-ranging study, there are other sources of literature important to the various backgrounds, facts, cases, and concepts inherent to answering the central research question. There is an assertion that ISIS attacks are not “lone wolf attacks” alone, but a part of a larger strategical concept. This is the first literature required to round out the research. Also central to the thesis is the understanding of the existing knowledge and expertise of terrorism in Europe. These sources add important perspective and knowledge to better establish a potential connection between terrorist attacks and RW. Finally, literature pertaining to counter terrorism is important for the conclusion and recommendations of the thesis. If the cases derive a strong connection between terrorist

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Ibid., 5.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

attacks and remote warfare, then a strong understanding is needed of how Special Operations Forces or SOF might counter these efforts.

1. “Lone Wolf” Terrorism

As previously stated, the thesis will not contest the term or use of “lone wolf” terrorism, but rather place the term and use within the overall concept of a terror attack. To do so there must be a base of knowledge of what literature currently exists pertaining to “lone wolf” terrorism. There are multiple books that delve into the topic of “lone wolf” terrorism. Marc Sageman’s 2008 book *Leaderless Jihad* established a method for studying terrorism, specifically attacks that are carried out at great distance from the central command or cell of a terrorist organization.⁴¹ Jeffery Simon further codified this idea in his book *Lone Wolf Terrorism*.⁴² The attributes of both the individual and the organizations that Sageman and Simon support still hold true with the current attacks carried out by ISIS, but the research question will attempt to expand the understanding of the space between the attack and the supported organization. Simon discusses the nature of the Lone Wolf at an individual level. He explains the psyche of those who conduct the attacks and focuses much less on the organization or ideology that they claim to support. Simon further states, “lone wolves are not burdened by any group decision-making process or intergroup dynamics that can sometimes stifle creativity in formulating plans and operations.”⁴³ The “lone wolf” will be held under the assertion that it is an end state of a larger strategy.

In July 2016, Daveed Gartenstein-Ross and Nathaniel Barr wrote an article in the *Foreign Affairs Journal* entitled “The Myth of Lone-Wolf Terrorism,” in which the two authors attempt to redefine and expand the idea of “lone wolf” terrorism. The article outlines a set of categories that extra-national terrorist attacks can be set against. The authors state the danger in rushing to label operatives as disconnected from others. The authors also outline a need for understanding the networks involved in the so-called “lone

⁴¹ Marc Sageman, *Leaderless Jihad* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008), 200.

⁴² Jeffery D. Simon, *Lone Wolf Terrorism: Understanding the Growing Threat* (Amherst, NY: Prometheus Books, 2013), 335.

⁴³ Ibid.

wolf attack.”⁴⁴ As previously stated, there is a substantial need for understanding the space between the attack and the parent organization. Our research will attempt to further expand on Gartenstein-Ross and Barr’s argument by coupling the ideas of Sageman and Simon with the structured exploration of the conditions and mechanisms that enable groups such as ISIS to enact their strategy within Europe and beyond.

2. Terrorism in Europe

We now examine terrorism in Europe, specifically those acts recently carried out by or inspired by ISIS. Terrorism in its modern form is not a new phenomenon. It is more a communications than a military strategy. It has to be distinguished from an insurgency, even if insurgents use terrorism as a method to support their cause.⁴⁵

There is a broad body of literature about specific (political) historical periods, which covers almost every individual European terror organization and movement or the phenomenon of terrorism in general. One of the earliest publications using the term “irregular warfare” (IW) comes from the German professor Friedrich v. d. Heydte. He scratches not only strategic aspects, definitions and legal issues, but also provides a comprehensive overview about the specific conditions and terrorist strategies in Europe.⁴⁶ A contributing part for this research is his distinction of single aspects and mechanisms behind terrorist activities as part of IW.

Another Europe-focused assessment in the aftermath of 9/11 is Lorenzo Vidino’s *Al Qaeda in Europe*. Focusing on Al Qaeda (AQ) attacks in Europe, Vidino uses case studies of the major terrorist incidents in Europe to define the problem set. His research provides deeper insights about Jihad ideology in Europe, the terrorist and their background, their supporting structure and other important parts of the mechanisms behind these attacks in

⁴⁴ Daved Gartenstein-Ross and Nathaniel Barr, “The Myth of Lone Wolf Terrorism,” *Foreign Affairs*, July 26, 2016.

⁴⁵ Michael A. Sheehan, *Crush the Cell: How to Defeat Terrorism Without Terrorizing Ourselves* (New York: Crown Publishers, 2008), 127–129.

⁴⁶ Friedrich August Freiherr von der Heydte, *Modern Irregular Warfare in Defense Policy and as a Military Phenomenon* (New York: New Benjamin Franklin House, 1986).

Europe.⁴⁷ In a fine distinction between “Homegrown Threat,” “Home-brewed Threat” and “Imported Threat,”⁴⁸ he determines Europe’s biggest social and security problem: the radicalization of its growing Muslim population in parallel segregated societies as a result of Europe’s post-colonial structure and “refugees welcome” policy after the Soviet-Afghan war in the 1980s.⁴⁹ We can clearly identify parallel political and social conditions in recent times that contribute to ISIS-related RW-type activities in Europe.⁵⁰

The most recent research work focusing on “Islamist terrorism in Europe” comes from Petter Nesser. Giving a historical overview about Islamic terrorism in Europe, Nesser argues that the Jihadi threat to Europe is more organized than assumed.⁵¹ He also uses case studies as method to define the components of a Jihadi terror cell (micro-level) and a terror plot (mid-level), while also connecting the dots to a decentralized Jihad strategy for Europe (macro-level).⁵² Nesser further distinguishes between “leader-led” (top-down) and “leaderless” (bottom-up) terrorist approaches.⁵³ With his research, Nesser provides us probably the most comprehensive insight about the mechanisms and interdependencies within Islamist terrorism in Europe. The war in Syria and Iraq, with the rise of ISIS, created a “blowback” for Islamic terrorism in Europe,⁵⁴ amplified by the recent attacks in Paris, Brussels, Istanbul, Nice, and Germany.

Using these recent cases, we will connect the dots and open ties to define the enabling “terror attacks” as a part of RW.⁵⁵ In the absence of recent analytic literature on

⁴⁷ Lorenzo Vidino and Steven Emerson. *Al Qaeda in Europe: The New Battleground of International Jihad* (Amherst, NY: Prometheus Books, 2006).

⁴⁸ Ibid., 24–47.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 18, 88, 368–369.

⁵⁰ E.g. the so-called Refugee Crisis in Europe.

⁵¹ Petter Nesser, *Islamist Terrorism in Europe: A History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016).

⁵² Ibid., 8, 12, 18–20, 35, 243.

⁵³ Ibid., 2–5, 255–257.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 285–289

⁵⁵ This term will be further defined within the methodology section. It requires both a firm definition of what remote warfare is as it pertains to the study and an identification of existing mechanisms within the chosen case studies.

these newest cases, we will use official government reports, newspaper reports and journal articles to highlight the similarities and differences to “older” cases.

3. Counter Terrorism

The literature about counter terrorism will enable mainly the idea of how to counter the asserted concept of remote warfare. The existing publications set a scope of ideas and concepts that have potential applications following thorough case studies. While Vidino and Nesser’s research is mainly descriptive, Michael Sheehan provides us with his book *Crush the Cell*, which offers more implications from a counter-terrorism (CT) perspective.⁵⁶ Also focusing on AQ, but like Vidino embedding it in a Global Jihad framework, Sheehan uses case studies to determine the threat to the U.S. after 9/11 and provides some remarkable cornerstones that contribute to a more CT-focused and actionable (domestic) security strategy. By changing his level of analysis from the single cases to a macro-perspective, he connects the dots between “Lone Wolves, Cults and radical movements”⁵⁷ and an overall strategy, which contributes indirectly to our research. Stating that “intelligence is key,”⁵⁸ Sheehan defines some basic offensive⁵⁹ and defensive⁶⁰ strategies for CT. These defined strategies are a result of his knowledge and background in the U.S. Army Special Forces and NYPD’s CT cell, and are an outcome of his assessment of U.S. CT approaches in the aftermath of 9/11.⁶¹ These offensive and defensive strategies, even focused on the U.S., may be to a certain degree also useful for our own research’s conclusions and recommendations section focusing on Europe.

A recent study, commissioned by the European Parliament’s Policy Department for Citizens’ Rights and Constitutional Affairs, identifies (counter-) terrorism trends, threats and

⁵⁶ Sheehan, *Crush the Cell*.

⁵⁷ Ibid., 89–90.

⁵⁸ Ibid., 146–169.

⁵⁹ Ibid., 264, 267–272.

⁶⁰ Ibid., 273–277.

⁶¹ Ibid., 258.

policies in the European Union.⁶² This study is a consequent successor of the European Union's 2005 Counter Terrorism Strategy.⁶³ It focuses particularly on seven overall themes:

(1) fora, measures and tools for operational cooperation and intelligence /law enforcement and judicial information exchange, (2) data collection and database access and interoperability, (3) measures to enhance external border security, (4) combating terrorist financing, (5) firearms and explosive weapons, (6) criminal justice measures, (7) prevention of radicalization.⁶⁴

It further includes some deductive policy recommendations and measurements of effectiveness. The results and recommendations of this study should be beneficial to our own research's conclusions and recommendations section.

Another recent document with a comprehensive assessment of the Jihadi threat to Europe comes from the European Policy Center's Counter Extremism Project.⁶⁵ This study provides historical background, threat assessment, and countermeasures focused on violent extremism in Europe. One of its leading authors is the already-mentioned Lorenzo Vidino.⁶⁶

Both aforementioned documents make the distinction between "lone wolf" and coordinated attacks by militant groups. For both types of attacks, the studies assess the enabling mechanisms and radicalization processes. They both assess the so-called home-grown terrorism as one of the main challenges: "A network of people born and raised in Europe, often radicalized within a relatively short period of time, have proven to be willing and able to act as facilitators and active accomplices in terrorism...the attacks exposed the failure of counter-terrorism policies across the continent."⁶⁷ This network and further contributing factors will be one of the main focuses of our theory-building case study.

⁶² "The European Union's Policies on Counter-Terrorism," Directorate-General for International Policies, January 2017, [http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2017/583124/IPOL_STU\(2017\)583124_EN.pdf](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2017/583124/IPOL_STU(2017)583124_EN.pdf).

⁶³ "The European Union Counter-Terrorism Strategy," Council of the European Union, November 30, 2005, <http://register.consilium.europa.eu/doc/srv?l=EN&f=ST%2014469%202005%20REV%204>.

⁶⁴ Directorate-General for International Policies, "The European Union's Policies on Counter-Terrorism."

⁶⁵ Vidino, Lorenzo, "Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) Measures in Europe," in *The Challenge of Jihadist Radicalization in Europe and Beyond*, European Policy Center, March 22, 2017, accessed April 25, 2016, http://www.epc.eu/documents/uploads/pub_7510_thechallengeofjihadistradicalisation.pdf.

⁶⁶ Program Director for the Program on Extremism, George Washington University.

⁶⁷ Vidino, "Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) Measures in Europe."

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II. RESEARCH DESIGN

This research will not develop a completely new theory of RW via case studies in a heuristic sense. It will initially follow deductive research methods to identify gaps in existing RW theory.⁶⁸ This will be done by deductively testing the most comprehensive RW model of Dr. Moran/Oxford Research Group (ORG): Remote Control Project, in order to assess the validity and scope conditions of the existing model.⁶⁹ In a follow-on inductive approach, new variables will be added to this model by in-case and cross-case comparison of the most recent ISIS terror attacks (sub-type 1 and 2) in Europe in order to establish a new RW domain: remote terrorism.

The theory testing part of this research will test the selected cases in Europe for Dr. Moran's six principles of RW. Simple observations within these representative cases of both sub-types will potentially answer the question, "Do Dr. Moran's six principles exist within the cases of ISIS terror attacks in Europe?" The next question that requires an answer is, "What other factors establish these attacks as a form of RW?" These observations will also look for patterns inherent to the cases. If a majority of Moran's principles exist, and there are a significant number of defining factors and patterns that establish them as a unique domain, then the following hypothesis toward an adjustment of existing RW theory can be made: "Terrorist Groups (like ISIS) that seek to control or already control territory will use RW to conduct extra-territorial attacks." The following cases will be central to the study: the 2015 Paris attack, the 2015 Brussels attack, the 2016 Nice attack, and the 2016 Würzburg attack. All cases have the commonality of being either directed (sub-type 1) or inspired (sub-type 2) by ISIS and are considered to be similar to the most likely terrorist scenarios in Europe in the future. The research will go further in attempting to establish these attacks within the theory of RW as a new domain within Moran's model. This should be supported by accommodating equifinality through deriving equal causal patterns from the selected subset of cases, which ideally

⁶⁸ Alexander George and Andrew Bennett, "Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences," *MIT*, 2005, 111, 112.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 75.

lead to similar outcomes.⁷⁰ The aforementioned combination of deductive theory testing and inductive supplementing⁷¹ of existing RW theory is laid out in Figure 3.

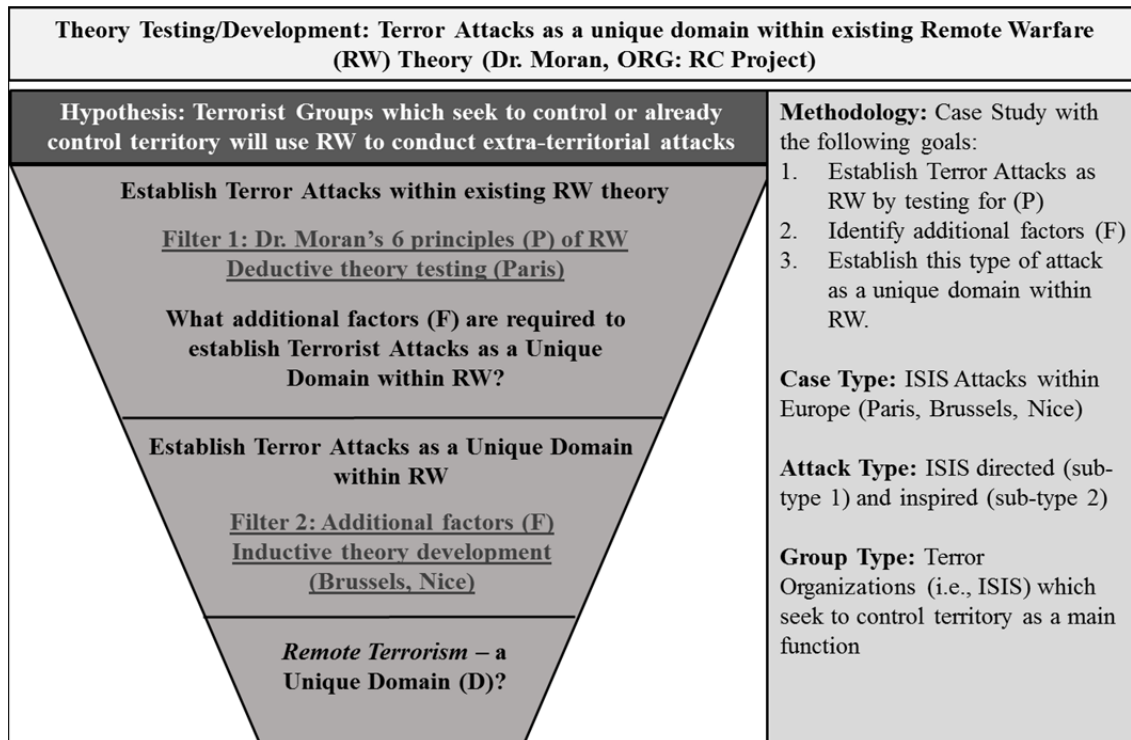


Figure 3. Theoretical Framework and Method⁷²

The data used within the case studies will be derived from multiple published works and data sets. In Section I ISIS Strategy and related sections, data is collected from a report from START.⁷³ The International Institute for Counter Terrorism produced a special report from which much of the data will be pulled for the Brussels case.⁷⁴ The

⁷⁰ Ibid., 161.

⁷¹ Ibid., 111.

⁷² Adapted from Jon Moran, *Remote Warfare (RW): Developing a Framework for Evaluating Its Use* (London: Remote Control Project, 2015).

⁷³ Johannes Siebert, Detlof von Winterfeldt, and Richard S. John, "Identifying and Structuring the Objectives of the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) and Its Followers," *Decision Analysis* 13, no. 1 (March 2016): 26–50, accessed April 25, 2017, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1287/deca.2015.0324>.

⁷⁴ Karen Daniel, *The Brussels Attacks - 22/03/2016 What Do We Know? Insights from ICT Experts* (Herzliya, Israel: International Institute for Counter Terrorism, 2016).

Trends Research & Advisory Group has also published various reports concerning the Paris and Nice attacks in France, from which data will be used.⁷⁵ Other data sources from specific data sets relevant to ISIS terrorism in Europe will be used.⁷⁶

A. EXPANDING THE CONCEPT

Dr. Jon Moran and ORG: Remote Control Project have done some comprehensive and pioneering work in defining and outlining a model of RW as it pertains to the British strategy of standard drone use in warfare. “Remote-control warfare is an emerging strategy that allows for conflict to be actioned at a distance. It incorporates technologies and light-footprint deployments that enable policymakers and military planners to approve actions that would unlikely be considered if using conventional means.”⁷⁷ The Moran Report itself, however, also offers one of the few non-technical definitions found through exploring existing theories. Dr. Moran argues that RW is not a new type of war and even states that “a concentration on technology [such as drones] may lead away from understanding the ‘deep’ nature of remote warfare [better understood as] military activities from a distance rather than using conventional warfare.”⁷⁸

The Moran Report and ORG further defines **five overall key areas/domains (D)** of remote warfare:

1. Special Forces
2. Private military and security companies
3. Unmanned vehicles and autonomous weapon systems
4. Cyber warfare and intelligence

⁷⁵ Cristopher Griffin, “The Paris Attacks and Future Operations Against Daesh,” *Trends Research & Advisory*, last modified December 16, 2015, accessed September 10, 2016, <http://trendsinstitution.org/?p=1638>; “Preventing the Nice Attack: Learning from Historical Experience,” *Trends Research & Advisory*, last modified July 27, 2016, accessed September 9, 2016, <http://trendsinstitution.org/?p=2025>.

⁷⁶ E.g., “Global Terrorism Data Base,” Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism.

⁷⁷ Oxford Research Group, “Remote-Control Warfare Briefing #17,” *The Remote Control Project*, August 2, 2016, accessed October 12, 2016, <http://remotecontrolproject.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/Open-Briefing-remote-control-warfare-briefing-17-0108161.pdf>.

⁷⁸ Interview Jon Moran, last modified September 29, 2016, accessed October 12, 2016, <http://remotecontrolproject.org/aspects-of-remote-warfare-2/>.

5. Surveillance and reconnaissance⁷⁹

All these key areas are dissociated from conventional warfare areas by following a specific set of RW typical principles. Moran's **six overall principles (P)** are:

1. The use of flexible expeditionary/policing forces rather than garrisons operating from networks of "lily pad" bases
2. The use of local auxiliary forces who have knowledge and less accountability
3. The use of "killing at a distance" techniques based on new technology
4. The use of elite special units (both public and private) as force multipliers (may include covert action)
5. The increasing emphasis on intelligence/surveillance to enable force concentration
6. Information Operations⁸⁰

We argue that those six principles (P) and some other specific factors can be observed in both subtypes of terrorist attacks like Paris. If this is true, then we are able to add the aforementioned sixth key area (D) to the RW theory: 6. remote terrorism. We further argue that both sub-types of terror attacks (directed and inspired) follow the same principles and have the same desired effects. In order to establish the framework for adding this new key area (domain) to the theory, we have to apply the outcomes of Paris to the aforementioned principles. Analyzing our Paris case with this specific lens, we find not only evidence that conforms to those six principles (P) of RW, but also some partially essential additional factors (F) that may make a RW-type terror attack a unique sixth domain (D) within Moran's model.

⁷⁹ Oxford Research Group, "Remote-Control Warfare Briefing #17," *The Remote Control Project*, August 2, 2016, accessed October 12, 2016, <http://remotecontrolproject.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/Open-Briefing-remote-control-warfare-briefing-17-0108161.pdf>.

⁸⁰ Jon Moran, *Remote Warfare (RW): Developing a Framework for Evaluating Its Use* (London: Remote Control Project, 2015), 4.

B. CASE: PARIS, FRANCE, NOVEMBER 13, 2015

1. Summary

The preplanned and coordinated attacks in Paris on Friday, November 13, by three groups of armed terrorists and suicide bombers hit the famous “Bataclan” theater, the soccer stadium “Stade de France,” and several bistros and bars almost at the same time. About 129 people were killed and another 351 wounded.⁸¹ ISIS immediately claimed responsibility for the attacks as retaliation for the ongoing French (and coalition) airstrikes on ISIS targets in Iraq and Syria.⁸² French President François Hollande called the attacks an “act of war by ISIS, planned in Syria, organized in Belgium, and perpetrated with support from French citizens.”⁸³ All identified Paris attackers were EU citizens who had combat experience and fought for ISIS in Syria. Some had returned to Europe, pretending to be refugees, following the waves of asylum seekers. The head of the jihadist terror cell, 27-year-old “Abdelhamid Abaaoud is believed to have organized a string of attacks that made him the most talked-about—and, in jihadist circles, feted—terrorist since Osama bin Laden.”⁸⁴

2. Background

Since the *Charlie Hebdo* shooting and several related attacks, France had been on high alert for terrorist attacks. It had increased its inner security and reestablished border-control prior to the attacks. In anticipation of the United Nations Climate Change Conference, planned for December 2015, Paris was already a special focus for security

⁸¹ Christopher Griffin, “The Paris Attacks and Future Operations against Daesh,” *Trends Research & Advisory*, last modified December 16, 2015, accessed November 12, 2016, <http://trendsinstitution.org/the-paris-attacks-and-future-operations-against-daesh/>.

⁸² “2015 Paris Terror Attacks - Fast Facts,” CNN Library Europe, last modified November 30, 2016, accessed January 12, 2017, <http://www.cnn.com/2015/12/08/europe/2015-paris-terror-attacks-fast-facts/>.

⁸³ “Paris Attacks: Hollande Blames Islamic State for Act of War,” BBC News Europe, last modified November 14, 2015, accessed January 16, 2017, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-34820016>.

⁸⁴ Andrew Higgins, “Attacks in Paris,” *New York Times*, last modified November 19, 2016, accessed December 8, 2016, <http://www.nytimes.com/news-event/attacks-in-paris>.

and intelligence services.⁸⁵ Nonetheless, the attacks of November 13, 2015 in the Paris suburb of Saint-Denis exposed weakness and holes in the French and European security apparatus and open border system, which allowed Abdelhamid Abaaoud and his jihadist friends “to infiltrate France under the noses of the intelligence services across the Continent.”⁸⁶ According to French officials, the Paris attacks were plotted for 11 months and were part of a series of at least four to six other terrorist plots foiled in France and Belgium since spring 2015. According to several other sources, foreign intelligence agencies had also warned France of an imminent attack months before, but were ignored by French authorities.⁸⁷

This attack was most likely an act of compellence, aimed at getting France out of the war against ISIS. This assumption is supported by several other attacks against other European anti ISIS coalition partner countries.⁸⁸ “ISIS may be choosing to attack the most salient threats to its existence in spectacular ways to influence public opinion and turn them against policies of direct intervention [...] Terrorist attacks aimed at changing public opinion have been successful in the past, notably in the withdrawal of Spain from Iraq following the Al Qaeda bombing of Atocha train station in 2004.”⁸⁹ On November 15, however, France responded to the Paris attacks with a series of airstrikes against ISIS targets in the vicinity of Raqqa, an ISIS stronghold east of Aleppo in Syria. The aircraft carrier “Charles de Gaulle” was deployed into the Mediterranean Sea in support of the coalition air campaign. In the following weeks, the French government worked on legal,

⁸⁵ Eric Randoph and Simon Valmary, “Gunmen Kill More Than 120 in Wave of Attacks Across Paris,” Yahoo News, last modified November 13, 2015, accessed April 24, 2017, <https://www.yahoo.com/news/least-120-dead-paris-attacks-investigation-source-pta-013205822.html>.

⁸⁶ Andrew Higgins, “Attacks in Paris,” *New York Times*, last modified November 19, 2016, accessed December 8, 2016, <http://www.nytimes.com/news-event/attacks-in-paris>.

⁸⁷ Ceylan Yeginsu, “Paris Attacks: The Violence, Its Victims and How the Investigation Unfolded,” *New York Times*, last modified November 16, 2016, accessed December 4, 2016, <http://www.nytimes.com/live/paris-attacks-live-updates/turkey-warned-french-twice-about-attacker-official-says/>.

⁸⁸ Christopher Griffin, “The Paris Attacks and Future Operations against Daesh,” *Trends Research & Advisory*, last modified December 16, 2015, accessed November 12, 2016, <http://trendsinstitution.org/the-paris-attacks-and-future-operations-against-daesh/>.

⁸⁹ Ibid.

political and military countermeasures in response to the treat.⁹⁰ Meanwhile, an extension of the state of emergency to three months was proposed and approved.

3. Overview of the Attack

Three assault teams, or “platforms,” armed with small arms and explosives targeted six locations across Paris in nearly simultaneous attacks. They attacked the Stade de France stadium with suicide bombers and the La Petit Cambodge and Le Carillon restaurants, the Café Bonne Biere, the restaurant La Belle Equipe, the restaurant Comptoir Voltaire, and the Bataclan concert hall with gunmen and suicide bombers. Each team was controlled by an external source, had a specified target, and aimed at achieving a specific set of effects. The teams operated much like a drone swarm.⁹¹ The detailing of these attacks is broken up by assault team.

(1) Assault Team 1

Assault Team 1 led the first strike at 9:20 pm Central European Time (CET) near the national stadium Stade de France in the district Saint-Denis, Avenue Jules Rimet, while the French national soccer team was playing Germany. Ten minutes later, a second explosion rocked the same location. At 9:53 pm CET, another detonation followed on Rue de la Cokerie.⁹² Security measures at the stadium kept all of the suicide bombers from penetrating the stadium. French officials concluded that the task of the initial bomber was to detonate inside Stade de France, forcing a panicked exit onto the streets where the remaining assaulters would ambush the civilians causing massive casualties. The three suicide bombers and one bystander were the only casualties. All other visitors

⁹⁰ Ben Doherty, Jon Henley, and Ian Traynor, “Paris Attacks: French Police Launch Raids as Military Strikes Isis in Syria,” *The Guardian*, last updated November 16, 2015, accessed February 12, 2017, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/nov/15/paris-attacks-car-found-with-kalashnikovs-as-gunmans-relatives-questioned>.

⁹¹ John Arquilla, “The Coming Swarm,” *New York Times*, February 14, 2009, sec. OP-ED.

⁹² “2015 Paris Terror Attacks - Fast Facts,” CNN Library Europe, last modified November 30, 2016, accessed January 12, 2017, <http://www.cnn.com/2015/12/08/europe/2015-paris-terror-attacks-fast-facts/>.

and fans, including French President Francois Hollande, were evacuated in a safe and orderly manner.⁹³

(2) Assault Team 2

Assault Team 2 had the objective of attacking crowded Paris cafes and restaurants. At 9:29 pm CET the terrorists, armed with assault rifles, opened fire at the intersection of Rue Alibert and Rue Bichat, in the 10th district of Paris. They killed 15 civilians outside Café Le Carillon and inside the restaurant Le Petit Cambodge before fleeing in a nearby parked car. At 9:32 pm CET, an attacker with an assault rifle fired shots outside Café Bonne Bière on the Rue de la Fontaine-au-Roi south of the Rue Bichat. After killing five people and wounding another eight, the jihadists fled. At 9:36 pm CET, two other jihadists used automatic weapons to open fire on the outdoor terrace of the restaurant La Belle Équipe on the Rue de Charonne in the 11th district. After killing 19 people and critically wounding another nine, they escaped via a pre-staged vehicle. Four minutes later, in the same district, a suicide bomber entered the Comptoir Voltaire Café and placed an order before detonating his vest, killing himself and injuring 15 other civilians.⁹⁴

(3) Assault Team 3

Assault Team 3 had the task of conducting what has become known as the “Bataclan Theater Massacre.” At 9:40 pm CET, three jihadists armed with assault rifles and suicide vests entered the Bataclan concert hall and opened fire on a crowd of 1,500 during a concert of the U.S. band Eagles of Death Metal. After 20 minutes of firing, the attackers took around 100 hostages. The jihadists start to execute hostages before French police began their counter-attack. At 12:20 pm CET, the Brigade of Research and Intervention (BRI) and the police elite tactical unit RAID began active operations to take back the theater.⁹⁵ Two of the three team members detonated their explosive vests, one of

⁹³ “2015 Paris Terror Attacks - Fast Facts,” CNN Library Europe, last modified November 30, 2016, accessed January 12, 2017, <http://www.cnn.com/2015/12/08/europe/2015-paris-terror-attacks-fast-facts/>.

⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁹⁵ Ibid.

which was shot and his vest blew up as he hit the ground. Overall, 89 civilians lost their lives in the Bataclan Theater and another 99 were taken to nearby hospitals in critical condition. The identification process following the attack took over 10 hours.⁹⁶ The three members of Assault Team 3 were Ismail Mostefai, Samy Animour, and Foued Mohamed-Aggad. French authorities believe that the men used encrypted communication on their cellphones. One of their phones was found in a trash can at the Bataclan Theater. This phone led the investigators to the attacker's safe house.⁹⁷

4. The Human Drones

"French officials investigating the Paris attacks on November 13 have identified most of the terrorists they believe to have carried out the assaults, claimed by ISIS. Three teams, three people each, executed the attacks."⁹⁸ Most terrorists, including their leader, were killed or have since been arrested by the authorities.⁹⁹

During the investigation, links between the Paris and Brussels cells including their support networks were revealed.¹⁰⁰ "All of the known Paris attackers were EU citizens, who crossed borders without difficulty, albeit registered as terrorism suspects. According to the French Prime Minister, Manuel Valls, several of the perpetrators had exploited Europe's immigration crisis to enter the continent undetected. At least some, including

⁹⁶ Emmanuel Fansten and Willy Le Devin, "Attentats: Le Pire des Scenarios," *Liberation*, last modified November 14, 2015, accessed September 25, 2016, http://www.liberation.fr/france/2015/11/14/le-pire-des-scenarios_1413500.

⁹⁷ Andrew Higgins, "Attacks in Paris," *New York Times*, last modified November 19, 2016, accessed December 8, 2016, <http://www.nytimes.com/news-event/attacks-in-paris>.

⁹⁸ "Paris Attacks: Who Were the Attackers?" BBC News Europe, last modified April 27, 2016, accessed November 12, 2016, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-34832512>.

⁹⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰⁰ Alicia Parlapiano et al., "Unraveling the Connections Among the Paris Attackers," *New York Times*, last modified March 18, 2015, accessed September 25, 2016, <http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2015/11/15/world/europe/manhunt-for-paris-attackers.html>.

the alleged leader Abdelhamid Abaaoud, had visited Syria and returned radicalized”¹⁰¹ like thousands of other Europeans.¹⁰²

Abdelhamid Abaaoud, 28, Belgium citizen, is suspected to be the mastermind behind the Paris attacks. Besides the planning, he was personally involved in the armed assaults and shootings. He also directed the three terrorists in the Bataclan Theater by phone. His fingerprints were on an assault rifle found in an abandoned car in Montreuil. He was raised in Brussels, Belgium and was close to Salah Abdeslam.¹⁰³ Most likely he was involved in another four out of six foiled attacks against targets in Western Europe in 2015. According to the official sources, he joined ISIS in late 2013 and spent time in Syria. He was shot by the police during a raid on his apartment in Saint-Denis a few days later on November 18.¹⁰⁴

Salah Abdeslam, 26, French citizen born in Brussels, Belgium. His exact role in the Paris attacks is still vague. His brother Brahim Abdeslam was the suicide bomber that blew himself up in the Comptoir Voltaire Café. Prior to the attacks, he rented cars and hotel rooms outside Paris for the terror cell. His fingerprints were found in an apartment he rented under a false name.¹⁰⁵ In this apartment, parts of explosive devices and other evidence were secured by the investigators. They believe Salah Abdeslam was the logistics chief for the Paris attackers, drove the three “suicide bombers who attacked the Stade de France to their destination and may have been”¹⁰⁶ tasked for another planned attack in the 18th district, which never happened. After a lengthy manhunt, he was wounded and arrested during a police raid in Brussels on March 18 the following year.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰¹ “November 2015 Paris Attacks,” *Wikipedia*, last modified April 19, 2017, accessed April 22, 2017, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/November_2015_Paris_attacks#cite_ref-AFP_summary_21-3.

¹⁰² Zavis McDonnel, “Slain Paris Plotter’s Europe Ties Facilitated Travel from Syria,” *Los Angeles Times*, last modified November 19, 2015, accessed November 12, 2016, <http://www.latimes.com/world/europe/la-fg-paris-attacks-mastermind-20151119-story.html>.

¹⁰³ Paris Attacks: Who Were the Attackers?” BBC News Europe, last modified April 27, 2016, accessed November 12, 2016, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-34832512>.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

Brahim Abdeslam, 31, French citizen born in Brussels, Belgium. He lived with his brother Salah in Molenbeek, a district of Brussels with a majority Muslim population, which Belgian officials describe as a “breeding ground for jihadists.”¹⁰⁸ Both men had previous criminal records, and were linked to other planned terror plots in Belgium. They are also believed to have close relations to other terror cells. In 2015, Brahim tried to travel via Turkey to Syria to join ISIS, but was sent back to Belgium by Turkish authorities. Upon his return, Brahim Abdeslam was questioned by Belgian authorities about his intentions, but eventually released. According to friends and neighbors, both brothers were not attending prayers in the mosque, drank alcohol frequently and smoked. Brahim Abdeslam rented one of the cars used in the attacks and eventually died after he set off his explosive suicide vest near the Comptoir Voltaire Café.¹⁰⁹

Chakib Akrouh, 25, Belgium citizen of Belgian-Moroccan descent. He traveled to Syria in 2013 and joined ISIS. In his absence, “he was sentenced to five years in jail.”¹¹⁰ Authorities believe him to be the third terrorist in the bar and restaurant attacks that killed 39 people. Chakib Akrouh blew himself up with a suicide vest during the police raid on the apartment in Saint-Denis on November 18 where Abdelhamid Abaaoud was also killed.¹¹¹

Omar Ismail Mostefai, 29, French citizen of French-Algerian descent. He was born in Paris and a known criminal, convicted for several minor crimes, but was never imprisoned. “In 2010, he was identified by French authorities [as] being [an] Islamic radical and his details were entered in a terrorist database.”¹¹² Omar later traveled to Syria and was identified by Turkish authorities. Turkish authorities notified French

¹⁰⁸ “Paris Attacks: Who Were the Attackers?” BBC News Europe, last modified April 27, 2016, accessed November 12, 2016, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-34832512>.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹¹ Ibid.

¹¹² Ibid.

authorities about Omar twice without any response prior to the attacks. Omar Mostefai blew himself up at the massacre at the Bataclan Theater.¹¹³

Samy Amimour, 28, French citizen. He lived in a Paris suburb and was also well known to French intelligence services. “He was charged with terror offences in 2012 over claims he had planned to go to Yemen. He was placed under judicial supervision but then dropped off the radar, prompting the authorities to issue an international arrest warrant.”¹¹⁴ In 2014 he was in Syria, fighting for ISIS. His father traveled to Syria and tried to convince Samy to come home without success. He managed to come back to France in 2015 without getting arrested. “He was another of the suicide bombers who blew himself up at the Bataclan Theatre.”¹¹⁵ Other relatives of Samy had been arrested after the Paris attacks.

Foued Mohamed-Aggad, 23, Belgium citizen. He was initially lured to Syria by a French jihadist recruiter. In 2013, he and eight other men from the same district in Strasbourg went to Syria and joined ISIS. Two of them were killed in 2014 and seven returned to Belgium. Only Foued Mohamed-Aggad remained in Syria, until he came home intentionally to take part in the Paris attacks. He was the third suicide bomber who blew himself up at the Bataclan Theater.¹¹⁶

Ahmad al-Mohammad (unknown) pretended to be a Syrian named Ahmad al Muhammad. He possessed an emergency passport and other fake documents. These documents were found after his suicide attack at the Stade de France. According to a report another “document with the same name and data, but different image, had been found on another migrant, suggesting both men bought fake documents from the same counterfeiter.”¹¹⁷ Based upon French officials, the man entered Europe in Greece. It is believed he pretended to be a Syrian refugee. His fingerprints and photograph matched a

¹¹³ “Paris Attacks: Who Were the Attackers?” BBC News Europe, last modified April 27, 2016, accessed November 12, 2016, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-34832512>.

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

¹¹⁵ Ibid.

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

Syrian refugee who arrived on October 3. This (still unknown) man was the first terrorist to blow himself up at the Stade de France.¹¹⁸

Bilal Hadfi, 20, French citizen who lived in Belgium. According to Belgian investigators, he had gone to Syria and joined ISIS in early 2014. His return home remained undetected by authorities. They believe he eventually went back, hiding amongst refugees. He was one of the suicide bombers who died at Stade de France. “He had tried to get into the stadium while France were playing Germany but was denied entry and blew himself up in the nearby Rue de la Cokerie.”¹¹⁹

M al-Mahmod (unknown), was the third suicide bomber at the Stade de France. French authorities said his real identity is still unknown. He entered Europe together with Ahmad al-Mohammed in October 2015, travelling through Greece as a refugee.¹²⁰

5. Other Suspects

In addition to the abovementioned perpetrators, several other jihadi extremists connected to the Paris terror cell were killed by the police during the raids on November 18. One of them was Hasna Aitboulahcen, a cousin of Abdelhamid Abaaoud.¹²¹ She was the daughter of Moroccan immigrants. She was tracked by the police who tapped her phone. “She had become radicalized only in recent months and was thought to have had a brief conversation with police before she died.”¹²² Eventually, she led Abaaoud into the flat prior to the police raid. “Initial reports indicated she had blown herself up, but police later said it was a man that had done so. He has not been identified but there are some suggestions that he may have taken part in the attacks on bars and restaurants in the 10th and 11th districts of Paris with Abaaoud and Brahim Abdeslam.”¹²³ Another suspect, 29-year-old Jawad Bendaoud, was arrested during the raid. He is suspected of providing a

¹¹⁸ Paris Attacks: Who Were the Attackers?” BBC News Europe, last modified April 27, 2016, accessed November 12, 2016, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-34832512>.

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

¹²⁰ Ibid.

¹²¹ Ibid.

¹²² Ibid.

¹²³ Ibid.

safe house for the Belgium terrorists. “A girlfriend, Hayet, who was with Jawad Bendaoud on the night of the November 13 attacks told French TV that he suddenly realized he was in trouble. What happened in the days before the raid is unclear but she believes her friend had seen the state of the flat and was aware of what was going on. Mr. Bendaoud has been in trouble with the police before and has served time in prison.”¹²⁴

6. Connection to the Brussels Attacks

Several members of the terrorist support network were arrested in the aftermath of the Paris attacks. They supported the perpetrators with transportation, safe houses, logistics, and information. French and Belgian authorities mapped out the network of perpetrators and their supporting structures and links between the Paris and March 22, 2016 Brussels attacks.

7. Assessment

The Paris attacks fall in the sub-type 1 (directed) category. About 129 people were killed and another 351 wounded. A large majority of these casualties were young European civilians. Nine out of ten attackers were killed during the French police counter-attacks, blew themselves up, or got shot during later police raids in France and Belgium. Most other attackers and supporters were arrested. After the attacks, European officials reevaluated constantly the EU policy toward immigrants and refugees. The perceived vulnerability against terror attacks accelerated ongoing debates about increasing domestic security measures. Another ISIS-desired effect, a withdrawal of French troops from fighting ISIS never happened, however. Due to rapid police response and after intensive investigations, European authorities were able to crush this particular terror cell. The robust ISIS support network in Europe, partially discovered during the investigations the weeks after the attack, showed more than sufficient logistics capacity and lines of communication. “The French police report, together with hundreds of pages of interrogation and court records also obtained by *The Times*, suggest that there are lingering questions about how many others were involved in the terrorist group’s

¹²⁴ Ibid.

network, how many bomb makers were trained and sent from Syria, and the precise encryption and security procedures that allowed the attackers to evade detection during the three months before they struck.”¹²⁵

These attacks are also being utilized in the strategic sense, in the same fashion western states conduct attacks utilizing drones to fulfill military and political tasks. A key difference between the two is the chosen type of targets. One uses RW against military and political targets while avoiding civil casualties, and the other uses it deliberately against civilian (soft) targets. Another difference may be the use of Human Drones instead of high-tech UAVs. An important question is, is this a low-cost/low-tech form of remote warfare?

8. In-depth Analysis of Paris

The terrorists who conducted the Paris attacks could be described as a flexible expeditionary force (P1), supported by local auxiliary forces (P2) with detailed knowledge about their objectives. They killed people far away from their “home turf”—at a distance (P3), by employing conventional tactics and technologies with new methods. The use of battle proven jihadi veterans as well as additionally trained expeditionary and local auxiliary forces can easily be compared with an elite special mission unit (P4). The combination of the aforementioned dynamics shows finally also an increased intelligence and surveillance capacity (P5). ISIS claimed immediate responsibility for the attacks. They accelerated these local effects by intentionally producing video, online and print media statements in the same way that western militaries conduct Information Operations (P6). Within the first case, the Paris attacks, all of Moran’s six principles of RW exist. The valid conclusion is that this specific terror attack fits into the RW model. These are the obvious facts, but what else can be observed?

Establishing that the Paris attacks show that Moran’s principles exist in some form provides a possible connection to remote warfare. Even if the attacks qualify as

¹²⁵ Rukmini Callimachi et al., “A View of ISIS’s Evolution in New Details of Paris Attacks,” *New York Times*, last modified March 19, 2016, accessed November 19, 2016, <http://www.nytimes.com/2016/03/20/world/europe/a-view-of-isiss-evolution-in-new-details-of-paris-attacks.html>.

RW, there still need to be additional factors that make it a unique domain within RW and not simply once of the previously established domains. The following sections will seek to establish these “factors” from the facts of the case. If there are specific factors that set ISIS directed (sub-type 1) or inspired (sub-type 2) terror attacks apart from the other five domains (D), then it can be said with high likelihood that ISIS is conducting a form of RW.

ISIS claims their “home turf” to be within Iraq and Syria. The Paris attacks were ordered by the ISIS external operations wing, but were conducted in Western Europe against their “far enemy” at a distance. This observed cross-border penetration (F1) is more than only “killing at a distance” and can be considered to be a new stage in ISIS strategy. This categorization may also be helpful to distinguish these acts of terrorism from local attacks of the insurgency. ISIS is now also conducting extra-territorial attacks, most likely due to their recent territorial losses in Iraq and Syria. Terrorist acts like Paris are expected to continue and even intensify. Evidence shows that ISIS leaders are becoming more desperate, as well as retaliating for their recent losses.¹²⁶ They are also working on a reputation amongst the jihadist and extremist terror organizations. The Paris attacks showed the world that ISIS is able to stage coordinated attacks even against a strong security system at a distance.

Paris was the most intense attack against a western target since 9/11. These kinds of attacks could be evidence for ISIS being in a state of organizational and strategic transition. The Paris attacks also partially support ISIS strategy (F2) components C3 (attack foreign countries from the inside) and C4 (be recognized as the leader of the (global) Jihad).¹²⁷ This is presumably more exaggerated rhetoric or wishful thinking, however, and does not mean they really support a caliphate expansion into Europe. It is highly unrealistic that ISIS could control any “hostile” populations or territory. They still struggle to control Shia-dominated areas within or bordering their caliphate.

¹²⁶ Souad Mekhennet and Jody Warrek, “Inside ISIS: Quietly Preparing for the Loss of the “Caliphate,” *The Washington Post*, sec. World, July 13, 2016.

¹²⁷ Johannes Siebert, Detlof von Winterfeldt, and Richard S. John, “Identifying and Structuring the Objectives of the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) and Its Followers,” *Decision Analysis* 13, no. 1 (March 2016), accessed April 25, 2017, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1287/deca.2015.0324>. 176–183.

According to a UN intelligence report, the Paris attacks “were in part financed through welfare benefits received in Belgium that were moved via Western Union transfer.”¹²⁸ These occasional and small, unsuspecting, amounts of money also show the non-transparency and weaknesses within the financial sector and national investigation agencies. This case shows that ISIS is able to conduct a low cost and low profile form of RW against its external western enemies.

As already mentioned, France had already been on high alert for terrorist attacks. Due to the *Charlie Hebdo* attack and other related incidents, France had increased its inner security and reestablished border control prior to the attacks. All security measures in place enabled rapid response to the attacks, but did not deter or hinder them. Most of the Paris attackers were European nationals with migration backgrounds. Eight of eleven perpetrators were naturalized French or Belgium citizens (Europeans) with Arab migration backgrounds. Most of them visited training camps in Syria and were in direct contact with ISIS. Most of the perpetrators committed previous crimes or were directly involved in other terrorist plots. They were trained in a broad range of terrorist tactics like manufacturing all components of home-made explosive devices (suicide vests) and staging coordinated and highly accurate bombing or shooting attacks to delay coordinated police response in critical phases of an attack.

Like the aforementioned, the Paris attacks combined suicide bombings, shooting attacks, and hostage taking in order to achieve maximum casualties and media attention. ISIS claimed responsibility for ordering the attacks, timing, coordination, and chosen locations. The attacks are therefore categorized as sub-type 1 (directed) attack. They knew their area of operations and determined time and location of the attacks. Their chosen objectives (civil soft targets) and tactics (suicide bombers and armed assaults) ensured temporary overwhelming relative superiority. They also exploited weaknesses in Europe’s (open) border controls and used high-quality fake documents, which is also an

¹²⁸ Brett Wolf, “Paris Attacks Showed Role of Small Transactions in Terror Finance; UN Meeting Hears,” Thomson Reuters Accelus, April 15, 2016, accessed September 25, 2016, http://www.un.org/en/sc/ctc/docs/2016/thomson_reuters_15_april_2016.pdf.

indicator for their capacity to adapt to the environment.¹²⁹ All tactical advantages were on the attacker's side. Most of the previous attacks conducted by those who pledged fidelity to ISIS involved attacks in a single mode such as gunfire, bombing, or hostage taking.¹³⁰ In Paris, the fanatics combined all three in order to overwhelm the French emergency response. They deliberately chose targets and staged their timing of the attacks. Their infiltration, coordinated and precise actions on their objectives and partially their exfiltration were the result of precise planning by Abdelhamid Abaaoud. The Paris attacks were orchestrated, accurate and precise. Minutes after the attack, the first incident reports (including imagery on Twitter and Facebook) were available to the public. Television stations, newspapers and official statements dominated Western media for the following days. This was due to the selected targets, terror tactics, deliberate use of cruelty and humiliation, and public incentive. They achieved some residual effects (F3) on all sectors and levels, effects which partially still remain.

Being “remote controlled” is a critical factor for a RW-type attack. There is strong evidence, including witness testimony, that the Paris attackers used cell phones and encrypted communications to coordinate their attacks with “outside.” ISIS claimed immediate responsibility for the attacks. The perpetrators were trained in Syria, tasked and controlled by ISIS's external operational wing. These control methods (F4) played a decisive role and characterize these types of attacks as RW.

ISIS deliberately attacked western people and western culture in Paris. Targeting the stadium with suicide bombers during a national soccer game was intended to kill large numbers of civilians. The same is true for the Bataclan Theater. The assault on the restaurants and cafes on a Friday night were an attack on normal people's way of life. Those places look like randomly selected targets, but in combination one could conclude they were selected to achieve maximum symbolic value. Despite preemptively increased security measures, all six locations are considered as “soft-targets.” The attacks all started

¹²⁹ Rukmini Callimachi et al., “A View of ISIS's Evolution in New Details of Paris Attacks,” *New York Times*, last modified March 19, 2016, accessed November 19, 2016, <http://www.nytimes.com/2016/03/20/world/europe/a-view-of-isis-evolution-in-new-details-of-paris-attacks.html>.

¹³⁰ Ibid.

on a Friday night between 9:20 pm and 10:00 pm. The stadium, restaurants, cafes, and theater were all highly frequented by civilians (mostly young French people, students, and tourists) during these times. ISIS intentionally attacked the French people, French culture, and French way of life in a highly visible way. “The attacks struck directly to the heart of French society, which was surely Daesh’s [ISIS’s] plan.”¹³¹

As stated in the beginning of this chapter, we argue that those six principles (P) and some other specific factors (F) can be observed in terrorist attacks like Paris. What we found additionally during our analysis was not only a partial overlap between (P) and (F), but also some essential uniqueness in this possible new domain of RW. We further defined some of the additional RW factors (F) to be essential, and others to be only specific additional observations. These essential factors are Cross Border Penetration (F1), Support to Grand Strategy (F2), desired Residual Effects (F3), and the Control Method (F4) itself. Other factors and observations may or may not be observed as indicators in other terrorist attacks, but they are not an essential and common part of RW-type terror attacks. The testing for (P) and additional findings (F) within the case (Paris) is laid out in Table 3 and will be used for assessing the other cases exactly the same way.

Table 3. Paris Analysis Chart

Case #1	RW Principles (P)	F1	F2	F3	F4
Paris	P1-6 exist	Multiple cross-border penetrations in preparation	ISIS claimed responsibility, support of strategy* C3/ C4	Media attention, Military effects, Domestic effects	Ext/Int highly coordinated attack cells

* The strategy can be found in Chapter I, Section I B.

Having established a case (Paris) for testing and adding to the existing model, other cases should show the same patterns, the majority of Moran’s principles (P) and the

¹³¹ Christopher Griffin, “The Paris Attacks and Future Operations against Daesh,” *Trends Research & Advisory*, last modified December 16, 2015, accessed November 12, 2016, <http://trendsinstitution.org/the-paris-attacks-and-future-operations-against-daesh/>.

additional contributing factors (F). This has to be tested with a representative sample of cases in Europe of both terror attack sub-types (directed and inspired). If we can confirm the original principles of RW and the additional essential factors, ISIS is not only conducting RW, but this specific type of “remote terrorism” is also a new domain within and in addition to the existing RW model.

III. TOWARD A THEORY

In order to establish the idea of terrorist attacks inside Dr. Moran's theory of RW, other cases must show the same or a majority of the established principles and additional factors derived from the Paris Case. Unfortunately, there is no lack of cases of ISIS attacks over the past two years. The following two cases of ISIS attacks—Brussels, Belgium and Nice, France—will round out the idea that ISIS is conducting remote warfare. Each case represents one of the two sub-types of attacks, sub-type 1 (directed): Brussels and sub-type 2 (inspired): Nice. As with Paris, Dr. Moran's six principles of RW (P) and the additional four factors for RW (F) will need to be present. The analysis will be conducted in simple terms, answering IF-THEN statements. For example, IF Dr. Moran's RW Principles (P) exist in the cases THEN the case is an act of RW," and IF the four Key Additional Factors (F) exist in the case THEN the cases show the acts as a new unique domain within the existing RW concept (Figure 4).

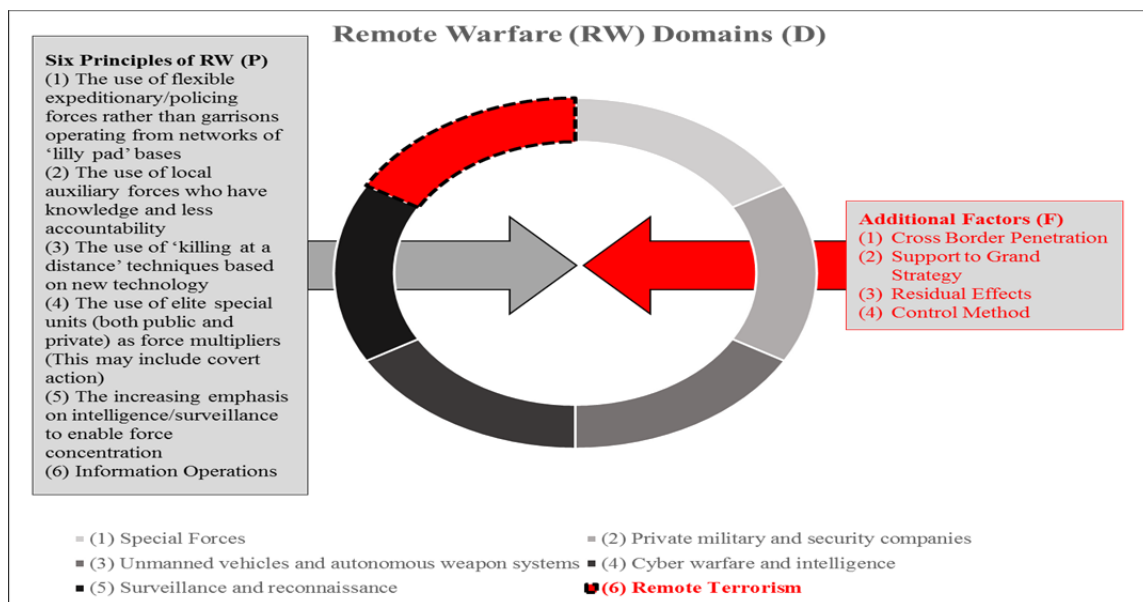


Figure 4. A New and Unique Domain (D) in RW Theory¹³²

¹³² Adapted from Jon Moran, *Remote Warfare (RW): Developing a Framework for Evaluating Its Use* (London: Remote Control Project, 2015).

A. TEST CASE 1: BRUSSELS, BELGIUM, MARCH 22, 2016

1. Summary

Europe was reeling from the attacks conducted in downtown Paris when, in late March 2016, another round of violent acts took place in neighboring Belgium. Zaventem Airport and the Maelbeek subway station in Belgium's capital of Brussels suffered coordinated attacks and became a battleground for the Islamic State against the West. Two separate groups of attackers killed 34 and injured 236 more civilians.¹³³ The attacks came a few months after the Paris attacks, shared the same attack networks, and were controlled by ISIS. All of these factors point to the possibility that these actions could show proof of ISIS's place in remote warfare theory.

2. Background

Belgium is widely considered the strategic and diplomatic hub of Europe. This consideration is due to its being home to both the European Union and NATO headquarters.¹³⁴ Most regard Belgium as the figurehead of European, and by extension Western, values. As with all countries, Belgium had open borders and a high level of cross-cultural acceptance. Belgium also has the highest number per capita of foreign fighters of any European or Western Country.¹³⁵ Within the context of the EU, Belgium has the fourth highest number of foreign fighters behind France, the UK, and Germany.¹³⁶

3. Overview of the Attack

At 8:12 am local time, terminal 3 of the Zaventem Airport became a war zone on the morning of March 22 when two explosions ripped through the crowded checkout zones. The brothers Khalid and Brahim El Bakraoui hid bombs in their suitcases, which upon detonation killed 14 people and injured another 106. About an hour later, another

¹³³ Karen Daniel, *The Brussels Attacks - 22/03/2016 What Do We Know? And Insights from ICT Experts* (Herzliya, Israel: International Institute for Counter-Terrorism, 2016).

¹³⁴ Ibid., 1.

¹³⁵ Ibid.

¹³⁶ Ibid.

bomber detonated an explosive belt inside a train car at the Maelbeek subway station. This attack killed 20 and injured 130.

4. Response

The international community condemned the attacks as acts of terrorism. ISIS's news agency released the following statement immediately after the attacks:¹³⁷ "A number of soldiers from the Caliphate – carrying explosive belts, bombs and automatic weapons, and targeting locations chosen with precision in the Belgium capital, Brussels – entered Zaventem Airport of Brussels and a subway station in order to kill a high number of crusaders. They then detonated their explosive vests in the middle of a crowd. The outcome of the attacks was 40 dead people and no less than 210 injured people."

The government of Belgium acted under a state of emergency and turned all policing and military efforts inward toward national security matters. All public transportation shut down in and around Brussels for the remainder of the day. Air traffic was diverted to other locations within Europe. Most major airports within Europe were put on their highest level of alert. Belgium increased its terror alert to its highest level, which included placing Belgian nuclear power plants on high alert.

5. Analysis

The Brussels case has many similarities with the Paris case, mainly due to their connection between the attack networks.¹³⁸ This example was also a directed attack, just the same as Paris. Dr. Moran's six principles (P) as well as the additional factors (F) derived from the Paris attacks will be used to further establish ISIS's terror attacks in the theory of RW.

a. The Six Principles (P)

The attack networks that operated with relative impunity within Belgium and Paris are the first to qualify within the first principle of RW. Salah Abdeslam was an

¹³⁷ Karen Daniel, *The Brussels Attacks - 22/03/2016 What Do We Know? And Insights from ICT Experts* (Herzliya, Israel: International Institute for Counter-Terrorism, 2016), 4.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, 10.

organizer of the Paris attacks and may have withheld information from his interrogation concerning the upcoming Brussels attack.¹³⁹ Principle 2 can be found in the use of local communities to garner support and material that were employed in both the airport and subway attacks. The El Bakraoui brothers lived in a tightknit Muslim community from which they could plan and conduct surveillance with relative impunity.¹⁴⁰ The “killing at a distance” principle is found in ISIS’s guiding policy¹⁴¹ of “paying the price.”¹⁴² In regards to the “new technology,” this has much to do with the way that ISIS controls its “drones.” The uses of social media, various smart phone apps (WhatsApp, Telegram, etc.) are all important parts in communicating with and controlling the attacks with deadly accuracy. The use of “elite special units” in Principle 3 can be found in the molding of each of the attack teams, which carried out two separate but precise attacks within areas of heightened security. The units likely together to gain a working knowledge of their equipment and how to make the most out of their weapons of choice. Intelligence and surveillance were integral to the success of each attack. The brothers Khalid and Brahim El Bakraoui lived in a nearby neighborhood and used it as a base for reconnaissance of the Maelbeek station.¹⁴³ Lastly, both before and after attacks ISIS used their version of Information Operations to forecast their attacks and provide justification through sympathetic websites.¹⁴⁴ Following the attacks, ISIS quickly let the world know that they were responsible for the murderous acts as well as regurgitating their reasoning.

b. Additional Factors (F)

Even with the Brussels attacks proven as possible RW, the facts within the case must also show the existence of the four key factors established through the Paris Case.

¹³⁹ Karen Daniel, *The Brussels Attacks - 22/03/2016 What Do We Know?*, 10.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid.

¹⁴¹ The so-called ‘policy’ comes from the “Management of Savagery,” written by pen name Abu Naji Bakr, noted al-Qaeda propagandist. He states that ‘paying the price’ is the idea of making an enemy think ‘one-thousand times’ before attacking regions managed by a regime of the administration of savagery or Caliphate.

¹⁴² Scott Englund, *Chaos, the Legacy of ISIS: Observations After Brussels* (Abu Dhabi: Trends Institute, 2016).

¹⁴³ Daniel, *The Brussels Attacks - 22/03/2016 What Do We Know? And Insights from ICT Experts*, 3.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid., 6.

The four key factors extracted from the Paris case can be found in various parts of the Brussels case. The Belgian-Moroccan national Najim Laachraoui¹⁴⁵ was suspected of making the bombs used in the Paris attacks and frequently moved between Belgium and France to coordinate with the Paris attack cell. Mohamed Abrini¹⁴⁶ was implicated in planning both the Paris and Brussels attacks. The fact that these two worked across international borders is evidence in showing a connection with Cross Border Penetration (F1). Support to ISIS strategy (see Section II) is found in the online statements by ISIS.¹⁴⁷ The strategy and connection directly to ISIS show cause that the attack directly supported ISIS strategy (F2). Residual effects (F3) can be observed in the nationwide response conducted by the government of Belgium. The government evacuated their nuclear power plants and fortified other major hubs of national importance. While the likelihood of being killed in a terrorist attack is extremely low,¹⁴⁸ the Belgian national response exhibited a residual effect of hyper-vigilance at the least. The maturity of the attack cells that coordinated not only among the Belgian attackers but with the Paris cells establishes a distinct amount of control. Veteran ISIS propagandist Fabien Clain allegedly coordinated their efforts. Clain is also suspected of coordinating the Paris attacks.¹⁴⁹ This external coordination and control directly supports F4 or the existence of a control method. Table 4 summarizes the Brussels case analysis and incorporates (a) the testing for the six principles of RW (P), and (b) the additional factors of remote terrorism (F).

¹⁴⁵ Aurelien Breeden and Lilia Blaise, "Najim Laachraoui, 24, Bomb Maker for Paris and Brussels Attacks," *New York Times*, March 25, 2016.

¹⁴⁶ James McAuley, "Belgium Confirms Arrest of 'Man in the Hat' at Airport Bombing," *Washington Post*, April 9, 2016.

¹⁴⁷ Karen Daniel, *The Brussels Attacks - 22/03/2016 What Do We Know?*

¹⁴⁸ Andrew Shaver, "You're More Likely to Be Fatally Crushed by Furniture than Killed by a Terrorist," *The Washington Post*, November 23, 2015.

¹⁴⁹ Roisin O'Conner, "Paris Attacks: Voice in ISIS Propaganda is 'Probably' French Jihadist Fabian Clain," *Independent*, November 17, 2015.

Table 4. Brussels Analysis Chart

Case #1	RW Principles (P)	F1	F2	F3	F4
Brussels	P1-6 exist	Multiple cross-border penetrations in preparation of the attack	ISIS claimed responsibility, support of strategy* C3/C4	Media attention, Military effects, Domestic effects	Ext/Int highly coordinated attack cells

* The strategy can be found in Chapter I, Section I, B.

B. TEST CASE 2: NICE, FRANCE, JULY 14, 2016

1. Summary

Bastille Day 2016 marked the 138th celebration of the storming of the Bastille during the French Revolution in 1789. The celebration is on the same level of national pride as Independence Day in the United States and is commemorated by nationwide military parades. On July 14, 2016, however, in Nice, France, the day was darkened by an attack by Tunisian-born Mohamed Lahouaiej-Bouhlel, who used a delivery truck to kill 86 civilians and wound another 303. The attack was covered worldwide and drew the ire of the French President toward the Islamic State, who claimed the attack only two days afterwards.¹⁵⁰ The attack was originally thought to be a “lone wolf” attack where the agent was self-radicalized and ready to commit violence, but the facts of the case will show otherwise. Through a series of interactions with co-conspirators, and self-research, Bouhlel became a drone for the Islamic State.

2. Background

The attacker was 31-year-old Mohamed Lahouaiej-Bouhlel, from Msaken Tunisia. He was married and had three children, and according to the media outlet *The*

¹⁵⁰ “Nice Attack: What We Know about the Bastille Day Killings,” BBC News, accessed February 7, 2017, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-36801671>.

Telegraph, was “entirely unknown to intelligence services.”¹⁵¹ Bouhlel was previously known to local police due to allegations of threats and violence spanning a period of six years. Bouhlel was also given a suspended six-month prison sentence after being convicted of violence with a weapon. He was not described as a devout Muslim and lived a lifestyle of drugs and sex.¹⁵² Within a few months prior to the attack, Bouhlel reportedly became more interested in radical jihadist movements, and was reportedly expressing sympathies toward ISIS actions in Syria.¹⁵³

Furthermore, French investigators found that Bouhlel was frequenting websites with ISIS propaganda and extremist views. His neighborhood may have allowed for contact with individuals already being tracked for their contacts with known Islamic radicals as well as individuals connected with the formerly known Al Nusra Front.¹⁵⁴ Ten days prior to the attack, Bouhlel grew a beard for “religious reasons,” and over the next few days began coordinating with co-conspirators and suppliers¹⁵⁵ in preparation for the attack. Finally, Mohamed Lahouaiej-Bouhlel was seen on security cameras conducting what would seem to be reconnaissance of his target location. He spent the few minutes prior to the attack taking a photo of himself in the truck and sending it to his family back in Tunisia as well as sending a last-minute text to one of his alleged accomplices nicknamed “C” concerning the need for more weapons.¹⁵⁶

3. Overview of the Attack

Fireworks lit up the night sky over the coastal city, and thousands crowded the famous Promenade des Anglais. The time was a little after 11:30 local time, when a local,

¹⁵¹ David Chazan et al., “Nice Terror Attack: ‘Soldier of Islam’; Bouhlel Took Drugs and Used Dating Sites to Pick Up Men and Women,” *The Telegraph*, July 17, 2016.

¹⁵² Ibid.

¹⁵³ Ibid.

¹⁵⁴ Kim Willsher, “Nice Attacker ‘Plotted for Months and Had Accomplices,’” *The Guardian*, July 21, 2016, accessed February 7, 2017, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/jul/21/nice-attacker-plotted-for-months-and-had-accomplices-prosecutor>

¹⁵⁵ Ibid.

¹⁵⁶ “Nice Attack: What We Know about the Bastille Day Killings,” BBC News, last modified August 19, 2016, accessed February 7, 2017, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-36801671>.

Laicia Baroi, saw a white delivery truck “speeding up, braking, speeding up again, and braking again.”¹⁵⁷ The attack commenced about a half hour later with the truck turning down the promenade and smashing through the barriers near the Lenval children’s hospital. The truck accelerated toward the larger crowds and continued another one and a quarter mile before being brought to a halt by police gunfire. Lahouaiej-Bouhlel exited the truck, fired at the police, and fled on foot. After a few blocks the police closed with and killed the attacker. The attack lasted minutes, but killed 86 civilians and injured another 303. The police found that Lahouaiej-Bouhlel was in possession of an automatic pistol, bullets, a fake automatic pistol, two replica assault rifles,¹⁵⁸ and an empty grenade.¹⁵⁹

4. Response

Within two days ISIS, through both their *Radio Bayan* and news outlet *Amaq*, claimed an “ISIS soldier” executed the attack.¹⁶⁰ French President Francois Hollande gave a televised statement saying “It’s France in its entirety that is being targeted by Islamic Terrorism.”¹⁶¹ France extended for another three months the state of emergency that had already been in place following the November Paris attacks. In the months following the attack, French police made multiple arrests to include an Albanian couple that were found to have had contact or provided direct support to Bouhlel prior to the attack. President Hollande also announced an increase in airstrikes against ISIS targets in Iraq and Syria.

¹⁵⁷ “Nice Attack: What We Know about the Bastille Day Killings,” BBC News, last modified August 19, 2016, accessed February 7, 2017, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-36801671>.

¹⁵⁸ A Kalashnikov and an M16.

¹⁵⁹ “Nice Attack: What We Know about the Bastille Day Killings,” BBC News, last modified August 19, 2016, accessed February 7, 2017, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-36801671>.

¹⁶⁰ Krishnadev Calamur et al., “Attack in Nice: What We Know,” *The Atlantic*, July 16, 2016.

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*

5. Analysis

It was initially thought that Mohamed Lahouaiej-Bouhlel acted alone and was as some experts call “self-radicalized.”¹⁶² The investigation by French police has since found evidence showing he was not acting alone, but in fact, in contact with ISIS operatives, thus being controlled from a distance. Again, the question must be asked: Do the facts of this case show both the existence of the Moran RW principles (P) and the additional factors (F)?

a. *The Six Principles (P)*

Mohamed Lahouaiej-Bouhlel was a French citizen, but he still maintained strong connections with his family in Tunisia, including his recently “radicalized” brother.¹⁶³ These connections show cause to support the first principle of RW (P1). Bouhlel worked closely with multiple co-conspirators¹⁶⁴ that supplied him with resources and weapons to carry out the July attack. This local “auxiliary” supports the existence of the second principle (P2). The control was applied through Bouhlel’s recent radicalization¹⁶⁵ and the fixation on enacting the “will” of ISIS on the victims in Nice. While there was no “new” technology in use during the attacks, the sophistication involved in the planning and execution was a rare occurrence. The “killing at a distance” (P3) has strong ties to the fact that these attacks were ordered from inside ISIS’s occupied territory and carried out against foreign objectives. Special units (P4) were formed to both carry out the attack and provide support to the actions. These teams trained for surgical execution against their chosen targets. The teams had to conduct high levels of surveillance (P5) in order to perform their attack. The teams knew exactly when and where to strike according to their

¹⁶² David Chazan, Tom Morgan, and Camilla Turner, “Bastille Day Terrorist Was Radicalized within Months and Sent 84,000 British Pounds to His Tunisian Family Days before Attack,” *The Telegraph*, July 17, 2016.

¹⁶³ Ibid.

¹⁶⁴ Kim Willsher, “Nice Attacker ‘Plotted for Months and Had Accomplices,’” *The Guardian*, July 21, 2016.

¹⁶⁵ Chazan, Morgan, and Turner, “Bastille Day Terrorist Was Radicalized within Months and Sent 84,000 British Pounds to His Tunisian Family Days before Attack.”

intelligence gathering operations.¹⁶⁶ Finally, ISIS conducted a multitude of activities supporting Information Operations (P6). These activities ranged from them directly claiming the attacks to the auxiliary support through various jihadist blogs and social media accounts.

b. Additional Factors (F)

The four additional factors must be present to support the idea of “terror attacks” as a unique domain within remote warfare. The fact that the attack was on Bastille Day stuck at the heart of French identity. Bouhlel was a French citizen, but found a connection with known jihadists in his rapid conversion to a more radical form of Islam.¹⁶⁷ This connection with foreign support directly supports F1. The attack on a sense of safety amongst French citizens coupled with the support to state strategy is firmly within F2 or support to ISIS strategy. France continued its pre-existing state of emergency as well as increased airstrikes against ISIS targets within Syria. It is interesting to note that France denounced these attacks as a direct attack on the nation of France, a proclamation that would normally be attributed to detesting another nation-state, which ISIS is not. The military strikes and national statements sanction inclusion in F3. Bouhlel spent hours in preparation for the attack. He stockpiled weapons, rented a truck (the true weapon), and surveyed his target although he acted alone, a highly connected auxiliary supported his attack. The attacker himself and his ISIS handlers were highly coordinated. The attacker was in constant contact with ISIS agents via direct and indirect methods (F4).

¹⁶⁶ Karen Daniel, *The Brussels Attacks - 22/03/2016 What Do We Know? Insights from ICT Experts* (Herzliya, Israel: International Institute for Counter Terrorism, 2016).

¹⁶⁷ Kim Willsher, “Nice Attacker ‘Plotted for Months and Had Accomplices,’” *The Guardian*, July 21, 2016.

Table 5. Nice Analysis Chart

Case #1	RW Principles (P)	F1	F2	F3	F4
Nice	P1-6 exist	Foreign attacker (Tunisian); coordinated with externals	ISIS claimed responsibility, limited support of strategy* C3/C4	Media attention, Military effects, Domestic effects	Ext. highly coordinated attack

* The strategy can be found in Chapter I, Section B.

The Brussels and the Nice attacks have proved both the existence of the six principles of RW (P) and the four key factors (F). This can allow for the expansion of the current theory¹⁶⁸ and establish remote terrorism as a unique domain (D). All of this shows a push past what the contemporary view of what a drone is, and how RW is conducted.

¹⁶⁸ Jon Moran, *Remote Warfare (RW): Developing a Framework for Evaluating Its Use* (London: Remote Control Project, 2015).

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IV. CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

A. CONCLUSIONS

Initially, we stated the following hypothesis: Terrorist Groups (like ISIS) that seek to control or already control territory will use RW to conduct extra-territorial attacks. In the deductive part of our research, we applied Dr. Moran's/ORG's comprehensive RW model to the ISIS attack in Paris. Our second hypothesis was: The six principles (P) exist within the cases of ISIS terror attacks in Europe. After categorization and in-depth analysis of a selected sample of additional cases of both sub-types (directed and inspired), we finally identified commonalities and patterns within these terror attacks. Therefore, our third hypothesis was: Other factors (F) establish these attacks as a unique domain (D) of RW. Both deductive theory testing and the inductive cross- and within-case comparison indicate, with sufficient evidence, that these attack types are indeed RW. Furthermore, we identified a gap in the existing RW model, which is remote terrorism as a unique domain.

1. The Principles of Remote Warfare (P)

Dr. Moran and the ORG identified six overall principles of RW: “(P1) The use of flexible expeditionary/policing forces rather than garrisons operating from networks of ‘lilly pad’ bases, (P2) the use of local auxiliary forces who have knowledge and less accountability, (P3) the use of ‘killing at a distance’ techniques based on new technology, (P4) the use of elite special units as force multipliers, (P5) the increasing emphasis on intelligence/surveillance to enable force concentration, and (P6) Information Operations.”¹⁶⁹ If the majority of these six principles are applicable to an activity, then the requirements to categorize that specific activity as RW are met. In our selected sample of cases of both sub-types, all of the six principles could be confirmed within each case. Our conclusion, based upon the sole existence of (P), is that these terror attacks of both sub-types can be counted as RW.

¹⁶⁹ Jon Moran, *Remote Warfare (RW): Developing a Framework for Evaluating Its Use* (London: Remote Control Project, 2015), 4.

2. The Additional Factors (F)

We also found additional factors (F) that are common to all tested terror attacks of both sub-types, directed and inspired. These additional factors (F) are: (F1) Cross Border Penetration, (F2) Support to Grand Strategy, (F3) desired Residual Effects, and (F4) the Control Method itself. These factors are in combination and characteristic unique to this specific type of RW and, in addition to the aforementioned principles (P), are sufficient to conclude that these terror attacks are a unique domain (D) of RW.

The additional factors (F) show a common pattern that is true to all tested cases of both sub-types. It is most likely that new cases/attacks will follow that same pattern. This means that this “adjusted” part of the existing model has some limited (we still do not know who, where, when—but we know roughly how and exactly why they do it) predictive capacities.

3. The Extended Domains (D) of RW

Dr. Moran and the ORG initially identified five key areas (domains) of RW, based upon the application of the six principles (P): (D1) Special Forces, (D2) private military and security companies, (D3) unmanned vehicles and autonomous weapon systems, (D4) cyber warfare and intelligence, (D5) surveillance and reconnaissance.¹⁷⁰ These domains (D) cover our conventional understanding of RW from a western perspective. Taking into account that all preconditions (P) and common additional factors (F) could be identified within the case study of recent terrorist attacks in Europe, we conclude that remote terrorism is the additional sixth domain (D6) among the already established domains of Dr. Moran’s model of RW. This also means, among other things, that the concept of RW is no longer (it probably never was) exclusive to major nation-states (mostly technology based), but is also an actionable strategy for terrorist groups.

¹⁷⁰ Oxford Research Group, “Remote-Control Warfare Briefing #17,” *The Remote Control Project*, August 2, 2016, accessed October 12, 2016, <http://remotecontrolproject.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/Open-Briefing-remote-control-warfare-briefing-17-0108161.pdf>.

4. Terrorist Organizations and RW

Based upon our research of the recent terror attacks in Europe and additional observations on the battlefields in Iraq and Syria, we are forced to conclude that global terrorist organizations (like ISIS) are indeed highly adaptive and learning organizations.¹⁷¹ This is true for them adjusting their grand strategy and even truer for them adjusting tactics, techniques, and procedures (TTPs), both based upon operational necessity and success. Using remote terrorism as a means in support of their strategy is not unique to ISIS. Whether this phenomenon is a strategy shift, caused by tactical losses on their home turf, or simply a new strategy stage, is debatable. ISIS is also not the only terrorist organization that seeks control over territory. It further can be assumed that other terrorist organizations that seek control over territory will use the same means (remote terrorism) in support of their grand strategy.

5. Limitations of Remote Terrorism

Besides ethics and effectiveness considerations, RW has some serious limitations. This is true for a UAV strike against a high value target (HVT) and also for a RW-type terror attack. Neither a single UAV strike (or a UAV air campaign) nor a specific RW-type terror attack (i.e., 9/11) was decisive enough to win a war. “Drones are fool’s gold: they prolong wars we can’t win.”¹⁷² This is also true of human drones. RW in a broader sense is more a supportive tactical tool to other military or para-military activities on an operational level, which is comparably cheap (money and lives), highly visible, and produces body count. This creates the perception of decisive strategic utility where there is none.

¹⁷¹ Felicia Schwartz, “Former DIA Director: ISIS Is a Learning Organization That Adapts Rapidly,” *Indian Strategic Studies*, last modified December 3, 2014, accessed April 24, 2017, <http://strategicstudyindia.blogspot.com/2014/12/former-dia-director-isis-is-learning.html>.

¹⁷² Simon Jenkins, “Drones Are Fool’s Gold: They Prolong Wars We Can’t Win,” *The Guardian*, last updated January 10, 2013, accessed February 12, 2017, <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2013/jan/10/drones-fools-gold-prolong-wars>.

6. Further Research

Besides the already mentioned additional factors (F1) Cross Border Penetration, (F2) Support to Grand Strategy, (F3) desired Residual Effects, and (F4) the Control Method itself, we found other variables contributing to the success of RW-type terror attacks. These variables may not be common to all cases of both sub-types, but can be observed and linked frequently to terrorist attacks. These variables are: (1) relatively low costs, (2) low profile, (3) high accuracy, and (4) high visibility. Both the additional factors (F) and the variables could provide deeper insights and show tender spots within the RW mechanism and, therefore, require further research.

Our research had a limited scope. We identified and confirmed a new domain (D) in RW theory, and parts of the enabling mechanism behind this remote terrorism. Besides a very limited predictive capacity of our extended model, however, we were only able to explain *how* and *why* terrorist organizations like ISIS are using RW as a method to support their cause. Further research should focus on figuring out *who*, *where*, and *when* RW-type terror attacks could occur. This could help western military, intelligence, and law enforcement to focus on general and specific preemptive protective measures to decrease terrorist organizations' capabilities and success of remote terrorism.

B. IMPLICATIONS

With the expansion of the conceptual meaning of RW, specifically within the context of Remote Terror, the question can be asked: "What can we do about it?" There are many things that are already in place throughout the world and in Europe that are being done to combat terror of all kinds. RW from terror organizations outside of the European theater has the potential to be more commonplace than ever before. The good news is that while these attacks may be nuanced in a way, there are policies and data that already exist in order to contend against any organization that would seek to conduct extra-territorial attacks against Europe. The implications within the following section will revolve around the idea of an organization such as ISIS that is using terror as an

extension of their strategic goals.¹⁷³ The implications will be set mainly for European military and governmental organizations and focus on the following three divisions: the source of the attacks, European policies, and integration versus assimilation.

The themes of synchronization (international, inter-organizational, etc.) as well as the simplicity of action are apparent throughout each of these divisions. Each of these sections also are points at which NATO SOF can find in-roads for bi-proxy support and direct support. NATO SOF through specific authorities¹⁷⁴ can engage at local levels in countries affected by the various activities of terror groups. NATO SOF must look for opportunities to align themselves with EU, OSCE, and other international organizations' efforts that best serve the respective countries and NATO as a whole for the best defense of Europe.

1. The Source

The notion of waging protracted war has been met with wide criticism, but a limited and aggressive campaign can have immediate effects. Much like the removal of a tumor, military action against the core of a group such as ISIS can attack their ambitions (i.e., nation-state equivalency), while SOF operations can seek to target leadership, disrupt networks, and resources while denying population centers. In short, ISIS or groups like ISIS that conduct attacks abroad must be removed by operations exclusively focused on the removal of that source.

Current operations against ISIS consist of multinational and U.S. forces, mainly under the Combined-Joint Task Force Operation Inherent Resolve. Their mission statement reads, "Combined Joint Task Force – Operation INHERENT RESOLVE (CJTF-OIR), by, with and through regional partners, is to militarily defeat DA'ESH in the Combined Joint Operations Area in order to enable whole-of-coalition governmental

¹⁷³ Johannes Siebert, Detlof von Winterfeldt, and Richard S. John, "Identifying and Structuring the Objectives of the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) and Its Followers," *Decision Analysis* 13, no. 1 (March 2016): 26–50, accessed April 25, 2017, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1287/deca.2015.0324>.

¹⁷⁴ "NATO's Policy Guidelines on Counter-Terrorism," NATO, last modified May 24, 2012, accessed April 10, 2017, http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_87905.htm.

actions to increase regional stability.”¹⁷⁵ While these operations have made considerable strides against ISIS, early criticisms of OIR categorized it as “underwhelming.”¹⁷⁶ Working through rebel forces and airstrikes were seen as not going too far to destroy ISIS forces. Currently, there is a debate on what “success” is against ISIS and when the operation should end.¹⁷⁷

While there is no prospect of an exact solution to end ISIS within Syria and Iraq, there is the potential to be swift, decisive, and limited. The Iraqis, Kurds, and moderate rebels do require support in their own ways, but if ISIS is to be truly eradicated then the group must be cut out with surgical precision. This must be separate from stability operations, support to Iraqi forces, or bi-proxy support to anti-Assad rebels. In summation, if the plan is to destroy an organization, then make it the operation’s sole priority. Strike the source, remove the source, and diminish the capability for ISIS or groups like ISIS to strike targets abroad.

2. Europe and CT Policies

This is a topic of much debate and action for many European countries, particularly those who are the start and end points of the refugee and migrant flows. There is no new suggestion to make, rather to highlight the documents and knowledge that already exist for the prevention and combat of terrorism, particularly those terrorists that serve under the banner of ISIS. Across Europe, there are sufficient policies in regards to Counter Terrorism, but proofs of simplicity, synchronization, and cross-border law enforcement must be improved upon if there is any hope to degrade the efforts of ISIS and future terror organizations.

¹⁷⁵ “Operation Inherent Resolve - About Us,” *CJTF-OIR*, last modified February 2, 2017, accessed April 10, 2017, <http://www.inherentresolve.mil/About-Us/>.

¹⁷⁶ “Critics Say ‘Inherent Resolve’ Mission Against ISIS Is Underwhelming,” National Public Radio, last modified October 15, 2014, accessed April 10, 2017, <http://www.npr.org/2014/10/15/356451133/critics-say-inherent-resolve-mission-against-isis-is-underwhelming>.

¹⁷⁷ “Defining Military Success in Iraq,” *Defense One*, last modified November 3, 2016, accessed April 10, 2017, <http://www.defenseone.com/ideas/2016/11/us-military-doing-its-job-against-isis-rest-politics/132899/>.

The 2005 Counter-Terrorism Strategy from IPOL for the Directorate General for International Polices¹⁷⁸ outlines an analysis of counter terrorism policies across multiple European countries within the European Union. The recommendations are very helpful in terms of outlining how most European countries could efficiently fight terrorism within their respective countries.¹⁷⁹ For instance, the study highlights existing channels for cooperation, stating, “there is a formal channel to cooperate, as well as an informal channel and that the latter is extremely important and hence should be strengthened, rather than creating yet another framework for cooperation or data sharing.”¹⁸⁰ The study also highlights a true number of returnees that pose security risks.¹⁸¹ Understanding this data has the potential for the streamlining of resources toward those individuals who truly pose a threat and those who do not. The recent attacks in Sweden show a possible gap in this understanding.¹⁸²

While there is no real “grand solution” for the migration crisis stemming from the conflict in Syria, there is plenty of data that show the overwhelming numbers of asylum seekers, refugees, and displaced persons that seem to have no end. There are many reactions across Europe both socially and politically. The social reactions range from a wholesale reception of displaced persons to localized crises in neighborhoods where the blending of cultures has come to violent clashes. Political paralleling of these societal reactions is now commonplace across Europe. Whether or not there will ever be a median opinion both politically and societally, there remains the fact that displaced persons will be a fixture within Europe for the foreseeable future,¹⁸³ and there is a growing conflict of

¹⁷⁸ Kristina Milt, *The European Union’s Policies on Counter-Terrorism Relevance, Coherence and Effectiveness* (Brussels, Belgium: Directorate General for Internal Policies, 2017).

¹⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 19.

¹⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 30.

¹⁸² Ross Clark, “Sweden Realises the Danger of Its Open-Door Policy,” *The Express*, last modified April 11, 2017, accessed April 11, 2017, <http://www.express.co.uk/comment/expresscomment/790430/Sweden-Stockholm-attack-open-door>.

¹⁸³ Michelle Mittelstadt, “Moving Europe Beyond Crisis,” *Migration Policy Institute*, last modified April 11, 2017, accessed April 10, 2017, <http://www.migrationpolicy.org/programs/moving-europe-beyond-crisis?gclid=COCuh-6f-tlCFQx6fgodYSgNng>.

cultures that has the potential for more damage than any number of terror attacks. The following section lays out the arguments for how best to approach this issue.

3. Integration vs. Assimilation

The most complicated aspect of how to counter terror organizations such as ISIS in Europe is how to curtail recruitment and radicalization. It is easier to issue arrest warrants, kill suspected terrorists, and even root out suspected terrorists. The large and ever-growing numbers of displaced persons currently in Europe highlights the issue of integrating these individuals or assimilating them into European cultural and economic systems. These are two sides of an argument that is both socially and politically charged.

The Atlantic produced an article with anecdotal evidence of the advantages of integrating Syrian children into Dutch schools.¹⁸⁴ While the article has its shortfalls, it does make the point of the difficulties of assimilating refugees into European cultures. The specific issue is that of the sense of a “lost identity.”¹⁸⁵ This particular issue plays well with ISIS narratives that the West desires to degrade Islam with decadence. Assimilation also plays to the personal grievances that many foreign fighters claim as their motivations to either conduct attacks domestically or depart to fight for ISIS.

The individual believes that the undermining of his or her identity leaves them without purpose or history, presents the government as a representative thief. The idea that language is an underpinning to proper integration comes up often across various discussions.¹⁸⁶ The website, *Debating Europe* describes the emphasis on diversity, particularly in language as a “two-way street,” whereby the country as well as the refugee must attempt to recognize the value of their respective languages to each other’s culture, while all along establishing common language to solve grievances of any kind. The

¹⁸⁴Tracy B. Hamilton, “Losing Identity during the Refugee Crisis,” *The Atlantic*, last modified May 16, 2016, accessed April 11, 2017, <https://www.theatlantic.com/education/archive/2016/05/balancing-integration-and-assimilation-during-the-refugee-crisis/482757/>.

¹⁸⁵ Ibid.

¹⁸⁶ “How Can Europe Better Integrate Immigrants?” *Debating Europe*, last modified April 11, 2017, accessed April 17, 2017, <http://www.debatingeurope.eu/2015/07/02/how-can-europe-better-integrate-immigrants/#.WOx5cv3asy5>.

common language will allow for the displaced individuals' proper access to the labor market and dispute resolution, while maintaining their cultural identities at home.¹⁸⁷

As stated in the introduction, NATO SOF has the opportunity to further integrate itself into existing CT structures, as well as use authorities to advantage themselves over ISIS and any future terror organizations. remote terrorism can be effectively countered and prevented. Unfortunately, recent history has proven there will be no shortage of opportunities to do so. NATO SOF, U.S. SOF, and their allies can ensure the safety of their countries' citizens and reassure them of their government's diligent effort to defeating any homegrown or outside threats.

¹⁸⁷ "How Can Europe Better Integrate Immigrants?" Debating Europe, last modified April 11, 2017, accessed April 17, 2017, <http://www.debatingeurope.eu/2015/07/02/how-can-europe-better-integrate-immigrants/#.WOx5cv3asy5>.

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